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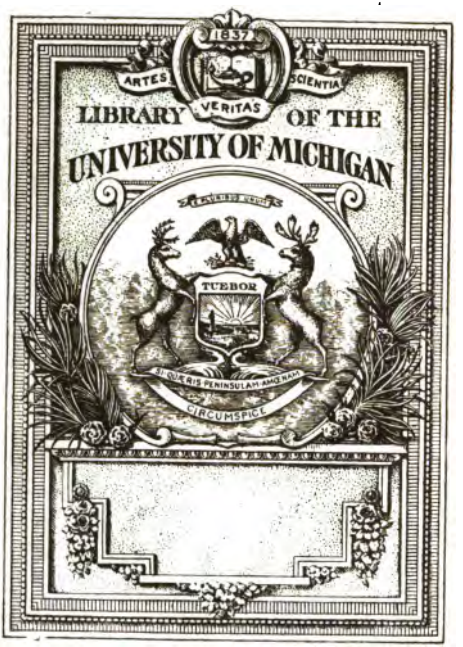

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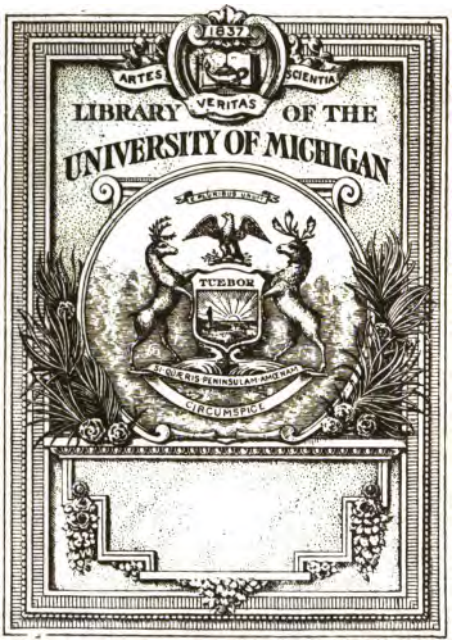

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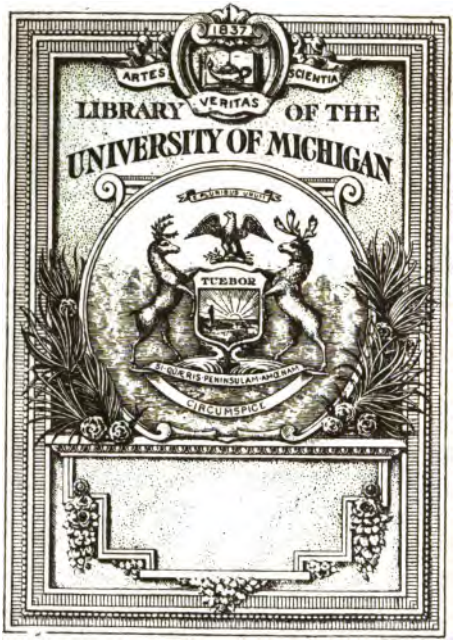

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CHAPTER VII.

The Greeks not eminent in the Useful Arts—Commerce—Superiority in the Fine Arts—Greek Architecture—Gothic Architecture—Sculpture—Inferiority of the Moderns—Greek Religion favourable to Sculpture and Painting—Greek Painters.

It is not among the Greeks that we are to look for the greatest improvement in the useful or the necessary arts of life. When we speak of the eminence of this people in the arts, we are understood to mean those which, by distinction, are termed the fine arts, or those which mark the refinement of a people, and which come in the train of luxury. Agriculture, which deservedly holds the first rank among the useful arts of life, does not appear ever to have attained a remarkable degree of advancement among the Greeks.* At Sparta, this as well as other arts being confined to the slaves, it is not there that we are to

*Plato, de Legg. l. 7, and Aristotle in his Politic. l. 8, c. 10, both explode the practice of agriculture by the free-born citizens, and confine it to the slaves.

look for any remarkable progress in those departments. With respect to Attica, the soil of that country was naturally barren: its best produce was the olive; and the Athenians the more readily confined themselves to that branch of husbandry, that it was little, if at all, attended to in any of the other states of Greece. That Attica produced little or no grain is evident from this fact, mentioned by Demosthenes, that the Athenians imported annually four hundred thousand medimni of corn.* The medimnus was somewhat more than four pecks of English measure.

Deficient as the Greeks seem to have been in agriculture, they are not much more considerable as a commercial people. Xenophon, indeed, in his treatise on the Public Revenue, advises his countrymen to spare no pains in advancing their commerce, and lays it down as a sound maxim, that the riches of individuals constitute the strength of a state: but such ideas were repugnant to the common notions of his countrymen, at least in the earlier periods of the republics. The laws of Lycurgus, we have seen, proscribed commerce, with all other arts, as tending to produce an inequality of wealth: nor did the system of Solon give any encouragement to trade. Notwithstanding these impediments, however, from the time when the Greeks had seen and tasted the Asiatic luxuries, from the era of the invasion of Xerxes, the Athenians began to cultivate commerce with considerable assiduity. Corinth, we know, and the Greek colony of Syracuse, became from that source extremely opulent. They navigated the Mediterranean in large vessels, capable of containing two hundred men; and in the age of Alexander we have seen a voyage performed, of ten months' duration, in sailing from the mouth of the Indus to Susa, in the farther extremity of the Persian Gulf.

But these were not the arts for which Greece was

* The term corn is used as the general name of all the cereal grains.

ever remarkable among the nations of antiquity. We must now speak of those for which she was eminently distinguished; in which she surpassed all the contemporary states, and of which the remaining monuments are at this day the models of anxious imitation, and the confessed standard of excellence in the judgment of the most polished nations of modern times. I speak of what are termed the *fine arts*, in all of which, architecture, sculpture, painting, and music, the Greeks were superlatively excellent.

After the defeat of Xerxes, the Greeks, secure for some time from foreign invaders, and in full possession of their liberty, achieved with distinguished glory, may certainly be considered as at the summit of their grandeur as a nation. They maintained for a considerable time their power and independence, and distinguished themselves during that period by a universality of genius unknown to other ages and nations. The fine arts bear a near affinity to each other; and it has seldom been known in any age which produced or encouraged artists in one department, that there were wanting others who displayed similar excellence in the rest. Of this, both ancient and modern history afford ample proof, in the ages of Pericles, of Leo X., and of Lewis XIV. The arts broke out at once with prodigious lustre at Athens, under the luxurious administration of Pericles. In architecture and sculpture, Phidias at that time distinguished himself by such superior ability, that his works were regarded as wonders by the ancients, so long as any knowledge or taste remained among them. His brother Panæus (or Panænas) was an able assistant in some of his noblest works, and is himself distinguished as the artist who painted the famous picture in the Pœcile at Athens, representing the battle of Marathon, which is described by Pausanius and Pliny as so perfect a picture, that it presented striking portraits of the leaders on both sides. It was from the designs of Phidias that many of the noblest buildings of Athens were reared; and

from the example of these, a just and excellent taste in architecture soon diffused itself over all Greece. Phidias had many disciples; and after his time arose a succession of eminent architects, sculptors, and painters, who maintained those sister arts in high perfection for above a century, till after the death of Alexander the Great. This, therefore, may be termed the golden age of the arts in Greece; while in those departments the contemporary nations were yet in the rudest ignorance. We shall afterward see what reason there is to believe that the Etruscans were an exception from this observation: but it is certain that, whatever were their attainments in the fine arts in those remote ages, their successors, the Romans, inherited none of that knowledge from them; for at the period of the conquest of Greece, the Romans had not a tincture of taste in those arts, till they caught the infection from the precious spoils which the sole love of plunder then imported into Italy. But of this change operated on the taste and manners of the Romans, we shall in its proper place treat more at large. It is sufficient here to observe, that even when time had brought the arts to the highest perfection they ever attained among the Romans, this people never ceased to acknowledge the high superiority of the Greeks, of which we have this convincing proof, that when the Roman authors celebrate any exquisite production of art, it is ever the work of a Phidias, Praxiteles, Lysippus, Glycon, Zeuxis, Apelles, Parrhasius, or, in fine, of some artist who adorned that splendid period, and not of those who had worked at Rome, or who had lived nearer to their own times than the age of Alexander the Great.

The Greeks are universally acknowledged as the parent of architecture, or at least of that peculiar style of which all after ages have confessed the superior excellence. The Grecian architecture consisted of three different manners, or what artists have termed the three distinct orders; the *Doric*, *Ionic*, and *Corinthian*. The Doric was probably the first regular order among

the Greeks. It has a masculine grandeur, and a superior air of strength to both the others. It is, therefore, the best adapted to works where magnitude and sublimity are the principal objects. Some of the most ancient temples of Greece were of this order, particularly that of Theseus at Athens, built ten years after the battle of Marathon, that is 481 years before the Christian era; a fabric which has stood 2260 years, and is at this day almost entire.

One observation may here be made which is applicable to all the works of taste. The character of sublimity is chaste and simple. In the arts dependant on design, if the artist aim at this character, he must disregard all trivial decorations; nor must the eye be distracted by a multiplicity of parts. In architecture, there must be few divisions in the principal members of the building, and the parts must be large and of ample relief. There must be a modesty of decoration, contemning all minuteness of ornament, which distracts the eye, that ought to be filled with the general mass, and with the proportions of the greater parts to each other. In this respect the Doric is confessedly superior to all the other orders of architecture, as it unites strength and majesty with a becoming simplicity, and the utmost symmetry of proportions.

As the *beautiful* is more congenial to some tastes than the *sublime*, the lightness and elegance of the Ionic order will, perhaps, find more admirers than the chastened severity of the Doric. The latter has been compared to the robust and muscular proportions of a man, while the former has been likened to the finer, more slender and delicate proportions of a woman. Yet the character of this order is likewise simplicity, which is as essential a requisite to true beauty as it is to grandeur and sublimity. But the simplicity of beauty is not inconsistent with that degree of ornament which would derogate from the simplicity of the sublime. The Ionic admits with propriety of decorations which would be unsuitable to the Doric. The volute

of the Ionic capital, frequently ornamented with foliage, the entablature consisting of more parts, and often decorated with sculpture in *basso*, and even *alto relievo;* all these have a propriety in this order of architecture, which is quite agreeable to its character. Of this order were constructed some of the noblest of the Greek temples; particularly the temple of Apollo at Miletus, that of the Delphic oracle, and the superb temple of Diana at Ephesus, classed among the wonders of the world.

The last of the Grecian orders of architecture is the Corinthian. It marks a period of luxury and magnificence, when pomp and splendour had become the predominant passion, but had not so far prevailed as to extinguish the taste for the sublime and beautiful. It had its origin at Corinth, one of the most luxurious cities of Greece; and was, probably, the production of an artist who wished to strike out a novelty agreeable to the reigning affectation of splendour, and to preserve at the same time a grandeur and beauty of proportions; thus studying at once to captivate the vulgar eye, and to preserve the approbation of the critic. Of this order were built many of the most superb temples of Greece, particularly that of Jupiter Olympius at Athens, founded by Peisistratus, but not completely finished till seven hundred years after, under the reign of Hadrian. Its remains are yet very considerable. But pleasing as this magnificent order may be to the general taste, it will hold but an inferior estimation with those who possess a refined judgment. It conveys not to the chastened eye that calm and sober pleasure which arises from grand and simple symmetry, or the effect of a few striking parts united to produce one great and harmonious whole; but leads off the attention to admire the minute elegance of his divisions, and solicits applause less from the production of a great and beautiful effect, than from the consideration of the labour, the cost, and artifice employed in its construction.

I have thus endeavoured to give some idea of the distinct characters of the three different orders of Grecian architecture. They have been elegantly and happily distinguished by the poet of the Seasons:—

> ——— First unadorned
> And nobly plain, the manly Doric rose;
> The Ionic then with decent matron grace
> Her airy pillar heaved; luxuriant last,
> The rich Corinthian spread her wanton wreath.
> *Thomson's Liberty*, part ii.

The foregoing remarks, it must be observed, are applicable only to those orders such as we find them in the chastest models of antiquity. It is but too certain that affectation even among the ancients corrupted the general taste; and the caprice of artists aiming at novelty and singularity, often produced very faulty deviations from the distinct characters of each of those orders. The moderns, treading in their steps, have indulged a license still more unbounded; and such have been the whimsical innovations of architects, that even from the professed treatises on the art, it is difficult to determine what are the pure and unadulterated models of the several orders; so that, had not time happily spared to us at this day some precious remnants of the genuine architecture of the Greeks in its purity, we must have in vain sought for it, either in the practice of architects, or in their writings.

While on the subject of architecture, which, in books that treat of the science, exhibits five distinct orders, it would be improper here to omit mentioning the other two, the Tuscan and the Composite, though of Italian origin; or to pass over entirely in silence a complete species of architecture, which, arising in times comparatively modern to those of which we now treat, seems to have borrowed nothing from those models of antiquity, but to depend on principles and rules peculiar to itself.

The *Tuscan* order is, as I have said, of Italian ori-

gin. The Etruscans, long before the era when Rome is supposed to have been founded, were a splendid, an opulent, and a highly polished people. Of this, the monuments at this day remaining of their works in sculpture and painting afford a convincing proof; for, not to mention the subjects of those paintings which exhibit all the refinements of social life, the very eminence which they evince in the art of design presupposes wealth, luxury, and high civilization. It is true, those paintings are supposed to have been the work of Greek artists; but, if those artists were encouraged by the Etruscans, and wrought for them, we must thence of necessity conclude that they were a most polished people. The Etruscan architecture appears to be nearly allied to the Grecian, but to possess an inferior degree of elegance. The more ancient buildings of Rome were probably of this species of architecture, though the proper Greek orders came afterward to be in a more general estimation. A respect, however, for antiquity prevented the Romans from ever entirely abandoning the Tuscan mode. The Trajan Pillar is of this order of architecture. This magnificent column has braved the injuries of time, and is entire at the present day. Its excellence consists less in the form and proportions of the pillar, than in the beautiful sculpture which decorates it. Of this fine sculpture, which represents the victories of Trajan over the Dacians, a very adequate idea may be formed, from the engravings of the *Columna Trajana* by Bartoli.

The Composite order, likewise of Italian extraction, was unknown in the age of the perfection of Greek architecture. Vitruvius makes no mention of it. It seems to have been the production of some conceited artist, who wanted to strike out something new in that way, or to evince his superiority to the ancient masters; but it serves only to show that the Greeks had exhausted all the principles of united grandeur and beauty in the three orders before men-

tioned, and to prove that it is not possible to frame a new order unless by combining and slightly varying the old.

The *Gothic* architecture, which is often found to produce a very striking effect, offers no contradiction to the observations I have made on the different orders of Grecian architecture. The effect produced by the Gothic architecture is not to be accounted for on the same principle of conformity to the rules of symmetry or harmony, in the proportions observed between the several parts; but depends on a certain idea of vastness, gloominess, and solemnity, which we know to be powerful ingredients in the *sublime*. Nothing is more common than to hear some pretended *cognoscenti*—who derive all their opinions from certain general laws of taste, which they want the capacity of applying to their proper subject, and have no guidance of a natural feeling to discern where they are inapplicable—exclaim with great emphasis, that it is surprising that the Italians, who had before them so many precious monuments of the Greek architecture, should ever have given into a taste so barbarous as the Gothic; and this, perhaps, while they are gazing with vacancy of eye upon the cathedral of Milan, one of the noblest Gothic structures in the world. The truth is, the two species of architecture are so different, that no comparison can with justice be instituted between them. The object, indeed, of both is the same—to strike with pleasure, or with awe; but they employ means which are totally distinct, and both obtain their ends. I have observed that the sublime disregards all minuteness of ornament, which serves but to distract the eye. The Gothic architecture may be judged to offend in that particular; though it ought to be considered that, in the best specimens of Gothic architecture, even where we find that minuteness of ornament, its effect is counterbalanced by the simplicity of the greater members of the fabric. The capital of a Gothic column,

it is true, is crowded with a profusion of fantastic ornaments of men, beasts, birds, and plants; but that capital itself consists of few divisions; its column is of a magnitude that nobly fills the eye; the sudden elevation of the arch has something bold and aspiring; and while we contemplate the great and striking members of the building, the minuteness of ornament on its parts is but transiently remarked, or noticed only as a superficial decoration, which detracts nothing from the grand effect of the whole mass.

To return: The Greeks, of all the nations of antiquity, possessed an unrivalled excellence in the arts depending on design. Sculpture and painting were brought by them to as high a pitch of perfection as architecture. It is the peculiar advantage of the art of sculpture, that, being ordinarily employed on the most durable materials, and such as possess small intrinsic value, it bids the fairest of all the arts to eternize the fame of the artist. While its works resist all natural decay from time, they afford no temptation to alter their form, in which consists their only value. They may lie hid from neglect in an age of ignorance; but they are safe, though buried in the earth; and avarice or industry, to supply the demands of an after age of taste, will probably recover them. What precious remains of an ancient sculpture have, in the last three centuries, been dug out of the ruins of Rome! What treasures may we suppose yet remain in Greece and in the rest of Italy! To the discovery of some of those remnants of ancient art has been attributed the revival of painting and sculpture, after their total extinction during the middle ages. This, at least, is certain, that, till Michael Angelo and Raphael, feeling the beauties of the antique, began to emulate their noble manner, and introduced into their works, the one a grandeur, and the other a beauty unknown to the age in which they lived, the manner of their predecessors had been harsh, constrained and utterly deficient in grace. Michael An-

gelo was so smitten with the beauties of the antique, that he occupied himself in drawing numberless sketches of a mutilated trunk of a statue of Hercules, still to be seen at Rome, and from him called the *Torso* of Michael Angelo. Raphael, whose works have entitled him to the same epithet which the Greeks bestowed on Apelles, *the Divine*—Raphael confessed the excellence of the antique, by borrowing from it many of his noblest airs and attitudes; and his enemies (for merit will ever have its enemies) have asserted, that of those gems and basso-relievoes which he had been at pains to collect and copy, he destroyed not a few, in order that the beauties he had thence borrowed might pass for his own. The practice of those artists, whose names are the first among the moderns, affords sufficient argument of the superiority of the ancients. Their works remain the highest models of the art; and we who, in the imitation of the human figure, have not nature, as they had, constantly before our eyes undisguised, and in her most graceful and sublimest aspects, can find no means so short and so sure to attain to excellence, as by imitating the antique.

Every artist should accustom his eye to the contemplation of the antique, before he begins to work after nature; for this reason, that the antique presents nature without her defects, offering the collected result of all her scattered beauties, and these even heightened by the imagination of the artist. The scholar who has thus made himself familiar with the antique, when he begins to imitate nature will immediately discern her striking beauties, which, had he not seen them in the antique, separated entirely from her blemishes, he might never have learned from his own taste to separate in the objects of nature; and here it may be remarked by the way, lies the difference between the Flemish and the Italian schools. The Flemings were ignorant of the antique, and some of them, as Rembrandt for example, held it in contempt. Nature

was their prototype, which, it must be allowed, they have successfully imitated; but, wanting judgment to discern her striking beauties, or to separate them from her defects, and utterly unconscious of that ideal beauty which results from this judgment, and towers far above nature, they have produced nothing noble, nothing graceful, nothing truly great.

I have said that the ancients, in the imitation of the human figure, had nature constantly before their eyes in her most graceful and sublimest aspects. The games of Greece, where the youth contended naked in the Palæstra, afforded a noble school for the improvement of sculpture and painting. Their artists there saw the finest figures of Greece, in all the possible variety of attitudes—an advantage which no modern academy of design can furnish. What is it that strikes the intellectual eye in the ancient Greek statues? It is a grandeur united with simplicity—an unaffected air of beauty or of dignity, which is the result of the artist's observation of nature unconstrained. The naked model in our academies of painting, who is desired to throw his body into such an attitude of exertion as the painter wishes to copy, will show that attitude much more constrained and unnatural than a gladiator, for instance, or a wrestler, who is thrown into it unconsciously by a natural effort in a real combat in the arena. Could the artist who cut the admirable figure of the Dying Gladiator in the Capitol, have copied the wonderfully simple and natural position of the limbs, the relaxing muscles, and failing strength; or the lineaments of the face, expressive of the utmost anguish, yet endured with manly fortitude; could the sculptor have copied all this from the model of a figure in the academy? It is utterly impossible; no artificial disposition of the body could give the smallest idea of it. It is this same statue of the Dying Gladiator of which Pliny speaks, and which he has so admirably characterized in a few words: "*Cresilas*

*vulneratum deficientem fecit, in quo possit intelligi quantum restet animæ."**

In like manner, in the admirable group of Niobe and her children, believed by some to be the work of Praxiteles, and by others of Scopas,† the various attitudes there exhibited, though the most impassioned that can well be conceived, are yet altogether so natural, so simple, and unaffected, that they demonstrate the source from which they were drawn to have been nature itself, under the actual influence of passions similar to what the sculptor has expressed. Even in those single statues unexpressive of passion, and where no particular action is represented, as in the Antinous and the Little Apollo, there is an ease and freedom of attitude which convinces us at first sight that the sculptor was not the servile copyist of a figure planted before him and directed to throw his limbs into a proper position, as a model in the Academy. The sculptors of those statues drew from nature, but it was from nature unconstrained; it was that their eyes were familiarly acquainted with those attitudes; they saw them daily in their games and spectacles, and that habit of observation enabled them faithfully to represent them.

From this air of unrestrained nature, and particularly from that expression of calmness and of ease

* "With such admirable art was the statue of the Dying Gladiator sculptured by Cresilas, that one could judge how much of life remained."

† Praxiteles flourished 369 B. C. His merits, and an enumeration of his principal works in sculpture, may be found in Pliny, lib. 34, c. 8; and lib. 36, c. 5. He excelled chiefly in female beauty, and more particularly in the heads and arms of his figures which were consummately graceful. The famous Phryne, was the model for his Cnidian Venus, which is yet preserved, and known to the moderns by the name of the Venus de Medici. Scopas flourished 430 B. C. Many of his works are enumerated by Pliny, lib. 36, c. 5; and it is sufficint argument of his talents to say that the best judges of antiquity deemed many of his statues equal to those of Praxiteles

which is observable, in many of the ancient statues, and which indicates the freedom of gesture of a person alone and unconscious of being observed, results that wonderful grace, which so few of the modern artists have attained the ability of expressing. Perhaps we may even doubt whether many of those artists have ever felt its excellence. To most modern artists and modern connoisseurs, the sedate grandeur, the simple and quiet attitude, appear lifeless and insipid; "The figure," they will tell you, "wants spirit: where is the air of the head? The limbs are carelessly disposed; they want attitude:" and the critic to illustrate his meaning, will throw himself into a stage posture, or what are faithful copies of those postures, the paintings of the French school. Hogarth, in his *Analysis of Beauty*, has happily ridiculed this miserable taste, by representing a French dancing-master standing by the side of the beautiful figure of the *Antinous*, and teaching the awkward youth to hold up his head, and put on the air of a man of fashion. Such indeed are the fantastic innovations introduced by modern manners and fashion in disguising the human figure, that the sculptor or painter has no longer nature for his school of instruction, nor can any otherwise form a conception of her genuine and unsophisticated features than by contemplating them reflected in the precious works of the ancient masters.

Among the Greeks, Nature was not only seen without disguise, and in her noblest and most graceful attitudes; she was in reality in the human figure superior to what we now see in the ordinary race of men. Without indulging the whimsical hypothesis of some philosophers, that the moderns, compared with the ancients, are a degenerate breed, it may safely be asserted, that among the ancient Greeks the youth, trained from infancy in the daily practice of gymnastic exercises, must have exhibited a finer form of body, a more perfect symmetry of limbs, and a shape more

picturesque, than what must necessarily result from the constraint of the modern method of clothing, and the luxurious and comparatively effeminate system of modern education. The varied forms of manly beauty exhibited in the Pythian Apollo, the Antinous, and the Fighting Gladiator, (if this statue be rightly so named) are evidently far beyond the model of the human figure as we see it in the present race of men; but we have every reason to believe that their prototypes were to be found in those ages to which we now refer, though doubtless we must at the same time make allowance for the genius of the artist, in exalting and improving even that excellent Nature which presented itself to his eyes. In contemplating the figure of the *Farnesian Hercules*, the work of Glycon (what Horace, by an allowable metonymy, has termed the *invicti membra Glyconis*),* and in considering the prodigious strength of the back and shoulders, and strongly-marked distinction of the muscles in the breast and arms, we are apt at first view to censure the form as exaggerated beyond all nature: but in this superficial judgment we forget what was that nature which the sculptor had for his model of imitation, and do not consider, that to personify a divinity whose characteristic attribute was strength, it was necessary that that nature, superior as it was, should be amplified and ex alted by the imagination of the artist. Of this heightening of nature the Greek sculptors have given the noblest examples in the representation of their Gods: "Non vidit Phidias Jovem," says Seneca, "nec stetit ante oculos ejus Minerva: dignus tamen illa arte animus et concepit Deos, et exhibuit."†

And this leads me to remark what must have been likewise another and a very powerful source of the ad-

* "The limbs of the invincible Glycon," for the invincible limbs of his statue.

† "Phidias never saw Jupiter, nor did Minerva present herself to his eyes: but his mind, worthy of his art, both formed those divine conceptions and represented them."

vancement of the arts of design among the Greeks. The Grecian mythology furnished a most ample source for the exercise of the genius of the painter and sculptor. The distinct and characteristic attributes of the several deities, their actions, and the poetical fables connected with their history, furnished an inexhaustible supply of sublime, beautiful, and highly pleasing subjects. We know, since the revival of the arts, how much those of painting and sculpture have been indebted to the Roman Catholic religion, which furnishes not only an abundant demand for the works of the artist, but supplies him with an endless variety of subjects in the lives of its numerous saints and martyrs. But in this respect at least the Roman Catholic religion must yield to that of Greece, that the painful and often shocking scenes which it presents for the pencil will bear no comparison with the varied, gay, and amusing pictures of the pagan mythology.

Of the ability of the Greeks in painting, we must speak with more diffidence than we have done of their superiority in sculpture. Of the latter, those admirable works yet remaining justify the highest encomium that can be bestowed upon them. Of the former, it would be unjust to form any estimate from those inconsiderable specimens, supposed of Grecian painting, which time has yet left undestroyed. The paintings discovered in Herculaneum, the celebrated picture of a marriage in the Aldobrandini collection, those found in the *Sepulchrum Nasonianum* at Rome, and other pieces enumerated by Dutens,* were probably the

* As M. Dutens, in his amusing and instructive essay on the Discoveries attributed to the Moderns, has enumerated, it is believed, all the existing remains of the genuine paintings of the ancients, it may afford satisfaction to readers of curiosity, to see the complete catalogue as given by that author. "The ancient paintings still to be seen at Rome are, a reclining Venus at full length, in the palace of Barberini, the Aldobrandine nuptials, a Coriolanus in one of the cells in Titus' baths, and seven other pieces taken out of a vault at the foot

work of Greek artists; for we have no evidence that the Romans ever carried any of the arts depending on design to much perfection. But with regard to the Greeks the case is very different. Their excellence in the art of painting is loudly proclaimed by all antiquity. Of their eminence in the kindred art of sculpture we are ourselves the judges. Now we cannot reasonably call in question the taste of those ancient authors who have written in praise of the paintings of the Greeks, when we find the same judgment which they have given upon the works of sculpture, confirmed by the universal assent of modern critics. If we find that Pliny is not guilty of exaggeration or censurable for false taste when he extols the noble group of *Laocoon and his sons*,* terming it "a work excelling all that the arts of painting and sculpture have ever produced," why should we suppose that he exaggerated, or that his taste was not equally just, when

of Mount Palatine, among which are a Satyr drinking out of a horn, and a landscape with figures, both of the utmost beauty. There are also a sacrificial piece consisting of three figures, and an Œdipus and a Sphinx, all of which formerly belonged to the tomb of Ovid. The pictures discovered at Herculaneum disclose beyond all others a happiness of design and boldness of expression that could proceed only from the hands of the most accomplished artists. The picture of Theseus vanquishing the Minotaur, that of the birth of Telephus, Chiron and Achilles, and Pan and Olympe, present innumerable beauties to all persons of discernment. There were found also in the ruins of that city four capital pictures, wherein beauty of design seems to vie with the most skilful management of the pencil, and which appear to be of an earlier date than those before spoken of."—*Dutens*, p. 370. [Some paintings of great spirit have since our author wrote, been discovered at Pompeii; but these were only the *furniture-pictures*, so to speak, of a private residence in a provincial town.]

* "Sicut in Laocoonte, qui est in Titi Imperatoris domo, opus omnibus et picturæ et statuariæ artis præferendum, ex uno lapide eum et liberos draconumque mirabiles nexus de consilii sententia fecere summi artifices Agesander et Polydorus et Athenodorus Rhodii."—*Plin.* l. xxxvi. c. 5,

he celebrates the praises and critically characterizes the different manners and distinct merits of Zeuxis,* Apelles, Aristides the Theban,† Parrhasius, Protogenes and Timanthes? Parrhasius seems to have been the Correggio of antiquity; his talent, the pleasing, elegant, and rounded contour. Pliny, (lib. 35, c. 10,) in characterizing the paintings of this artist, commends chiefly in his figures the *argutias vultus, elegantiam capilli, et venustatem oris*,‡ and highly praises the correctness of his outline. The same writer mentions an allegorical painting of Parrhasius, representative of the character of the Athenians, in which the artist seems to have formed a just idea of that inconstant and fickle populace. "*Pinxit et Demon Atheniensium, argumento quoque ingenioso: volebat namque varium, iracundum, injustum, inconstantem—eundem exorabilem, clementem, misericordem, excelsum, gloriosum, humilem, ferocem, fugacemque, et omnia pariter ostendere.*"§ It were to be wished that Pliny had given

* Zeuxis flourished 397 B. C. The ancient authors are very high in their praises of the works of this great painter. He was peculiarly excellent in painting female beauty.

† Aristides flourished in the age of Alexander the Great, and was contemporary with Apelles, Parrhasius, and Timanthes. Pliny says of Aristides, that his paintings were the first which gave the expression of the soul and the feelings: and as an instance, he mentions a celebrated picture of Aristides, in which, in a besieged city, a mother is represented dying of a wound in her breast, and holding back her child lest it should suck blood instead of milk; a picture which is supposed to be the subject of a beautiful epigram in the Anthologia, thus happily translated by Webb, in his Beauties of Painting:—

"Suck, little wretch, while yet thy mother lives,
Suck the last drop her fainting bosom gives:
She dies; her tenderness survives her breath,
And her fond love is provident in death."

‡ "The arch expression, the beauty of the hair, and charm of the mouth."

§ "He painted also an ingenious allegorical picture of the Genius of the Athenians, representing a being at one and the

us some idea of the composition of a picture so extraordinary in point of subject.

If Parrhasius was the Correggio, Apelles was indisputably the Raphael of antiquity: "*Omnes prius genitos, futurosque postea superavit Apelles,*"* are the words of Pliny, who, in his estimates of the works of art, is generally supposed to speak less from his own taste than from the common opinion of the best judges of antiquity. The peculiar excellence of Apelles, as of Raphael, lay in that consummate gracefulness of air which he imparted to his figures, and in which he surpassed all his rivals in the arts. "*Præcipua Apellis in arte venustas fuit, cum eâdem ætate maximi pictores essent; quorum opera quum admiraretur, collaudatis omnibus, deesse iis unam illam venerem dicebat quam Græci* Χάριτα *vocant: cætera omnia contigisse, sed hac soli sibi neminem parem.*"†—Plin. l. 35. c. 10. It is well known that Alexander the Great had the highest esteem of this artist; and having employed him to paint his mistress Campaspe, showed a singular example of generosity and self-command, in bestowing her as a gift on his friend the painter, who had fallen in love with his beautiful model. It was a high testimony to the merits of the artists, but it was at the same time a judicious policy for himself, that Alexander would suffer no other painter, statuary, or engraver to form his effigy, than Apelles, Lysippus, and Pyrgoteles; a fact which accounts for the singular

same time fickle, irascible, unjust, inconstant, yet placable and compassionate, vainglorious yet humble, ferocious yet cowardly."

* "Apelles surpassed all who had gone before, and all who will ever come after him."

† "In the grace of his pictures Apelles surpassed all the great painters of his age: whatever praise was bestowed on their works, still that peculiar beauty which the Greeks term *Charita* (Grace) was wanting; in the other qualities of his art, others may have attained equal perfection, but in this he was unrivalled."

beauty and excellence of all the figures yet remaining of that prince.

To the merits of Protogenes, a critic of genuine taste among the ancients has borne a high testimony: I speak of Petronius Arbiter. That author, mentioning his having seen in the palace of Trimalchio (Nero) some sketches by the hand of Protogenes, says that on handling them, he felt a reverential awe, as if they had been something more than human.* It was to the high excellence of Protogenes as an artist, that the city of Rhodes, the place of his nativity, owed its preservation when besieged by Demetrius Poliorcetes. When that prince saw no other means of reducing the city than by setting it on fire in a particular quarter, in which there was a celebrated painting of Protogenes, he chose rather to abandon the enterprise than hazard the destruction of what was, in his opinion, of the highest value. On the whole, if we have not the same demonstrative evidence of the attainments of the Greeks in painting that we have of their eminence in sculpture, namely, the existing monuments of the art, we have every degree of presumptive evidence which the subject can admit to warrant an opinion of an equal degree of excellence. These arts require the same talents, their progress is influenced by the same moral causes, they owe their advancement to the same taste and genius; and it is impossible to suppose the one to have been successfully cultivated in any age or nation, while the other remained in a rude and imperfect state.†

* In pinacothecam perveni vario genere tabularum mirabilem; nam et Zeuxidos manus vidi, nondum vetustatis injuria victas: et Protogenis rudimenta cum ipsius naturæ veritate certantia, non sine quodam horrore tractavi. Jam vero Apellis quam Græci *monocnemon* appellant, etiam adoravi. Tanta enim subtilitate extremitates imaginum erant ad similitudinem præcisæ, ut crederes etiam animorum esse picturam.—*Pet. Arb. Satyr.*

† For a most ample account of the ancient painters, sculp-

If any apology were necessary for the length of the preceding observations on the state of the arts in Greece, I would remark, that as it is the province of history to exhibit the character and genius of nations, so the national character of the Greeks was in nothing more signally displayed than in those branches of art to which I have called the reader's attention in this chapter. In tracing the mutual relation of moral and political causes, this peculiar genius of the Greeks will be found to have extended its influence to the revolutions of their states, and to their fate as a nation. Its advancement marked the decline of the severer morals and the fall of the martial spirit; for the fine arts cannot exist in splendour, but in a soil of luxury and of ease. The taste for these supplanted the appetite for national glory, and at length ignominiously supplied the place of public virtue. The degenerate Greeks were consoled for the loss of their liberty by the flattering distinction of being the humanizers of their conquerors, the *magistri et arbitri elegantiarum* [*masters and arbiters of refinement*] to the unpolished Romans.

CHAPTER VIII.

Public games of Greece—Effects on character—Manners—Poetical composition anterior to prose—Homer—Hesiod—Archilochus—Terpander—Sappho—Pindar—Anacreon—The Greek epigram—The Greek comedy, distinguished into the old, the middle, and the new—Aristophanes—Menander—Greek tragedy—Æschylus—Euripides—Sophocles—Mode of dramatic representation—The ancient drama set to music—The Mimes and Pantomimes—Of the Greek historians—Herodotus—Thucydides—Xenophon—Polybius—Diodorus Siculus—Dionysius of Halicarnassus—Arrian—Plutarch.

UNDER the early part of the Grecian history, we had occasion to treat of the origin, and somewhat of the nature, of the public games of Greece. Among all nations, in that period of society when war is not reduced to a science, but every battle is a multitude of single combats, we find those exercises in frequent use which tend to increase the bodily strength and activity. The Greeks, however, seem to have been the first who reduced the athletic exercises to a system, and considered them as an object of general attention and importance. The Panathenæan, and afterward the Olympic, the Pythian, the Nemæan, and the Isthmian games were under the sanction of the laws, and subject to the regulations laid down by the ablest statesmen and legislators. They were resorted to not only by the citizens of all the states of Greece, but even by the neighbouring nations. Thus not only was a spirit of union and good understanding kept up between the several states, which, in spite of their frequent dissensions and hostilities, made them always regard each other as countrymen, and unite cordially against a common enemy; but this partial intercourse which the games produced with the inhabitants of other countries induced an acquaintance with their manners and genius, and contributed very early to polish away the rust of barbarism. In those games, therefore, we may see the cause of two opposite effects: that Greece, in

the early period of her history, was distinguished for martial ardour and military prowess; and that in the latter ages, elegance, politeness, and refinement were her predominant characteristics.

This passion of the Greeks for shows and games, extremely laudable, and even beneficial, when confined within due bounds, was carried, at length, to a most blameable and pernicious excess. The victor, in the Olympic games, who had gained the first prize at running, wrestling, or driving a chariot, was crowned with higher honours than the general who had gained a decisive battle. His praises were sung by the poets; he had statues, and even temples, dedicated to his name. Cicero remarks, that among the Greeks it was accounted more glorious to carry off the palm at the Olympic games, than among the Romans to have obtained the honours of a triumph.* Of these nations, it was easy to foretel which was doomed to be the master, and which the slave.

The games of Greece were not exclusively appropriated to gymnastic and athletic exercises. Those immense assemblies were the resort, likewise, of the poets, the historians, the rhapsodists, and even the philosophers.

It is a singular fact, that in all nations there have been poets before there were writers in prose. The most ancient prose writers among the Greeks, of whom we have any mention, Pherecydes of Scyros, and Cadmus of Miletus, were posterior above 350 years to Homer. Of those poets who preceded Homer, some of whom are supposed to have been anterior to the Trojan war, as Linus and Orpheus, we have no remains.†

* Propè majus et gloriosius quam Romæ triumphasse.—*Ac. Orat. pro Flacco.*

† Linus is feigned to have been the son of Apollo, and is said to have been the first lyric poet. Stobæus gives some verses under the name of Linus; but they are believed not to be authentic. The fragments published under the name of

Homer, of whose birth both the place and the era are very uncertain, is, according to the most probable opinion, believed to have been a native of Ionia, and to have flourished 277 years after the taking of Troy; that is, 970 years before the birth of Christ. This illustrious man, the father of poetry, was, probably, a wandering minstrel, who earned his subsistence by strolling from one city to another, and frequenting public festivals and the tables of the great, where his music and verses procured him a welcome reception. Lycurgus, the Spartan lawgiver, is said to have been the first who brought from Ionia into Greece complete copies of the Iliad and Odyssey; which, however, were not arranged in the order in which we now see them, till 250 years afterward, by Peisistratus, tyrant of Athens. The method which he took to collect those poems, by offering rewards to all who could recite, or produce in writing, any of the compositions of Homer, renders it probable that those poems had originally been composed in detached ballads, or rhapsodies.* From these various recitations, which were carefully transcribed, Peisistratus caused certain learned men of his court to prepare what they considered the most perfect copies, and to methodize the whole into regular poems, as we now find the Iliad and Odyssey. The division of each poem into twenty-four books is supposed to have been a later operation, as none of the classic authors quote Homer by books.

The poems of the Iliad and Odyssey were again revised by Callisthenes and Anaxarchus, at the command

Orpheus, in the *Poetæ minores Græci*, (the minor Greek poets) and other collections, are plainly suppositious, and have not seen the air of remote antiquity. The poem of the Argonauts, which is attributed to him, is, on the authority of Stobæus and Suidas, the work of Onomacritus, who lived in the time of Peisistratus. *See* Suidæ Lex. *sub voce Orpheus.*

* A passage of Athenæus confirms this notion. He tells us that the rehearsers of detached ballads, or Rapsodoi, were called Omeristai. *Ath. Deip.* l. xiv.

of Alexander the Great, who, it is well known, held them in the highest esteem. They were finally revised by the celebrated grammarian and critic, Aristarchus, by order of Ptolemy Philometor, and this last corrected copy is supposed to be the exemplar of all the subsequent editions. But the genuine merits of Homer are independent of all artificial arrangement. His profound knowledge of human nature—his masterly skill in the delineation of character—his extensive acquaintance with the manners, the arts, and attainments of those early ages—his command of the passions—his genius for the sublime, and the melody of his poetical numbers, have deservedly established his reputation as the greatest poet of antiquity. It has been justly remarked, that from the poems of Homer, as from the fountain of knowledge, the principal authors among the ancients have derived useful information in almost every department, moral, political, and scientific.*

Although the subjects of the Iliad and Odyssey appear of great amplitude and extent, the action of both poems is, in reality, comprehended within a very short space of time. The action of the Iliad does not occupy many days. The indignation of Achilles upon the insult received from Agamemnon forms the subject of the poem. Achilles retires to his tent in deep resentment. His absence dispirits the Greeks, and gives fresh courage to the Trojans, who gain some considerable advantages, and are occupied in burning the Grecian fleet, when Patroclus comes forth, in the armour of his friend Achilles, to stimulate the valour of his countrymen. He is slain by the hand of Hector; an event which rouses Achilles from his sullen repose, who signally revenges the fate of his friend

* Adjice Mæonidem; a quo ceu fonte perenni,
Vatum Pieriis ora rigantur aquis.—*Ovid.*
"Add Mæonides; from whom, as from a perennial fountain, the lips of the poets have been wet with Pierean waters."
And not only the poets, but, as Longinus informs us, historians and philosophers drew largely from his copious source.

by the death of the magnanimous Hector. He then celebrates the obsequies of Patroclus, and delivers up to Priam for a ransom the body of his brave son. This is in brief the whole action of the Iliad.

The structure of the Odyssey, of which the principal action is included in a period of time equally short, is more various and artful than that of the Iliad. Ulysses had been absent many years from his country after the taking of Troy. His death was supposed certain, and Penelope, harassed by the importunate addresses of many suiters, could no longer invent plausible pretexts for delaying her choice of a second husband. At this crisis, the action of the Odyssey commences. Telemachus, the son of Ulysses, goes to Greece to interrogate Nestor regarding the fate of his father; and, during his absence, Ulysses, having left the island of Calypso, is thrown by a tempest on the island of the Pheæcians in the neighbourhood of Ithaca. Here he recites his various adventures, and obtains assistance from the prince of the country, for the recovery of his native possessions, now occupied and pillaged by the insolent suiters of his queen. He arrives in Ithaca, discovers himself to his son, and takes jointly with him effectual measures to accomplish his revenge, and extirpate these presumptuous ravagers. The whole action of the poem is comprised in forty days. The moral of the Iliad is, that dissension among the chiefs of a country is generally fatal to the people; and that of the Odyssey, that prudence joined to courage and perseverance are sufficient to surmount the most powerful obstacles.

The authenticity of the historical facts recorded by Homer has been much controverted. Even the war of the Greeks against Troy, and its ultimate issue in the destruction of that city, have been altogether doubted; and there are writers, of some name, who deny that Troy was ever taken by the Greeks; nay, that any such city as Troy ever had an existence. To this notion some countenance is derived from the cir-

cumstance that no vestige of a city is now to be found in the place of its supposed situation. But the universal belief of antiquity, and constant reference of the best-informed of the ancient writers to the general events of the Trojan war, and the facts connected with that belief in the authentic history of ancient Greece and Rome, seem to afford, at least, a much stronger presumption of veracity to the general opinion than to its contrary. Were it to be an established rule, that everything should be retrenched from the annals of nations for which we have not the most complete and irrefragable evidence, the body of ancient history would suffer indeed a great abridgment.

As the Ionic was the native dialect of Homer, so it is that which he has chiefly employed, though not exclusively, availing himself occasionally of the Attic, the Doric, and the Æolic, as well as of the general license of the poetic. Hence that variety in the rhythm and melody of his composition, which never palls upon the ear; and hence, likewise, the happy coincidence of sound and sense, which seems in him to have been less the result of study and artifice than of a musical ear, which instinctively prompted the most appropriate expression, to give the greatest possible effect to the thought or idea to be conveyed.

Besides the great works of the Iliad and Odyssey, the ludicrous poem of the *Batrachomyomachia*, or Battle of the Frogs and Mice, has been generally ascribed to Homer; and likewise a pretty numerous collection of hymns in honour of Apollo, Mercury, Venus, and the other divinities of his country. Of all these, however, the authenticity is questionable; though they have been cited as genuine by Thucydides, Lucian, Pausanias, and others among the ancient writers, and are in themselves of sufficient merit to give no discountenance to the common belief. The *Margites*, an undoubted work of Homer, of a comic nature, of which no remnant is preserved, is likewise cited by

Aristotle and the ancient writers as a composition worthy of its author.

Contemporary with Homer, or but a few years posterior to him, was Hesiod; a poet who seems to be more indebted for any share of esteem which he holds with the moderns, to his remote antiquity, and to the praises he has received from ancient writers,* than to any feeling of the real merit of his compositions. That Virgil highly esteemed Hesiod as a poet, is evident from the many imitations of the Greek author which occur in the first and second books of the Georgics: nor is it, perhaps, a rash supposition, that Virgil had conceived the entire idea of his didactic poem on Agriculture, from the *Works and Days* of Hesiod. In two passages of the Eclogues, Virgil alludes to Hesiod with encomium:—

> ——— et quis fuit alter
> Descripsit radio totum qui gentibus orbem,
> Tempora quæ messor, quæ curvus arator haberet?†
> *Ecl.* iii.

And, as the highest compliment to his friend Gallus, after introducing him to Apollo and the Muses, he makes the Heliconian maids present him, by the hand of Linus, with the same pipe which they had formerly bestowed upon Hesiod, the Ascræan old man.

> ——— hos tibi dant calamos en accipe, musæ
> Ascræo quos ante seni; quibus ille solebat
> Cantando rigidas deducere montibus ornos.‡
> *Ecl.* vi.

* Hesiodus—vir perelegantis ingenii, et mollissima dulcedine carminum memorabilis.—*Vell. Paterc.* lib. i.
"Hesiod—a man of the first genius, and distinguished by the delightful melody of his verses."

† "And the other—he who first indicated the divisions of the earth into different nations and peoples, and taught the husbandman the seasons of harvest and seed-time."

‡ "Take it, then—the Muses assign to you this pipe, for-

Of the authentic writings of Hesiod two entire works remain; the poem of *The Works and Days*, and *The Theogony*. The poem of the Works and Days, *Erga kai Emerai*, consists of two books: the first commences with the fables of Prometheus, Epimetheus, and Pandora, the Five Ages of the World, the Golden, Silver, Brazen, Heroic, and Iron Ages; the poet proceeds to give an ample encomium on virtue, enforced by the consideration of the temporal blessings with which its practice is attended, and the punishment which awaits vice even in this world; and he thence eloquently enlarges on the chief moral duties essential to the conduct of life. In the second book, the poet lays down a series of precepts in agriculture, and details the various occupations of the husbandman at the different seasons of the year; he thence digresses to the proper seasons for navigation: lays down judicious maxims for domestic life in the choice of a wife, friends, companions, &c.; and concludes with enforcing the duties of religion, and a strict regard to good morals, and a general purity of conduct.

The poem of *The Theogony* contains a genealogy of the greater and lesser deities and deified heroes of antiquity; with the mythology or fabulous history connected with the religion of ancient Greece. This poem is the original source from which all the subsequent Greek and Roman mythologists have derived their accounts of the birth, parentage, and exploits of the heathen divinities, and the details of those fables which supply the place of authentic history in those ages properly termed the Heroic.

About two centuries posterior to the age of Homer and of Hesiod, flourished Archilochus, the inventor of Iambic verse—a poet whose depravity of morals entailed contempt and infamy on him during life; but whose works, after his death, divided, as we are told,

merly conferred by them on the Ascræan sage, with which he was wont to charm even the obdurate elms from their mountains."

the public estimation with those of Homer. Yet as these works were of the lyric kind, it is not possible they could admit of a degree of merit which could at all stand in competition with those noble pictures of life and manners which are delineated by that prince of poets. Some fragments of Archilochus are preserved by Athenæus, lib. xiv.; by Pausanias, lib. x.; and by Stobæus, serm. 123. Contemporary with Archilochus was Terpander, a native of Lesbos, who is celebrated no less for his lyrical compositions, than for his exquisite talents as a musician. Of his verses we have no remains.* The two succeeding centuries were distinguished by nine lyric poets of great celebrity: Alcmann and Stesichorus, of whom we have a few imperfect remains preserved by Athenæus, Stobæus, &c.; Sappho, of whom we have two beautiful odes; Alcæus, Simonides, Ibycus, and Bacchylides, of whom there remain considerable fragments in a mutilated state; and Pindar and Anacreon, of whom so much is preserved as to enable us to form a just estimate of their merits.

Pindar, in the judgment of the ancients, was esteemed the chief of all the lyric poets. We have of his composition four books of odes, or triumphal eulogies of the victors in the Olympic, Pythian, Nemæan, and Isthmian games of Greece. It required a great power of poetical imagination to give variety and interest to a theme of so limited a nature, through a succession of no less than forty-five panegyrics; and without doubt the poet has displayed unbounded imagination, and the most excursive fancy. It is, however, to be suspected that the high admiration expressed by any modern for the compositions of Pindar, has either

* Plutarch informs us that Terpander was the inventor of those melodies or musical strains in which it was customary to recite the poetical compositions in the public games or contests for the palm of poetry; and that in particular he sung to strains of his own composition the poems of Homer, as well as his own.

in it a considerable tincture of affectation, or is the result of a blind assent to the opinion of Horace, and others of the ancient writers, who have extolled the Theban bard as beyond all reach of competition, or even imitation. The sober critics of antiquity, in judging of his merits, have not shown the same indiscriminating enthusiasm. Longinus confesses that Pindar, with all his sublimity, is apt to sink below mediocrity, and that his fire is sometimes altogether extinguished when we least expect it: and Aulus Gellius gives it as the general opinion that the poetry of Pindar is florid and turgid to excess.* Yet we can discern in him many striking figures, great energy of expression, and often the most harmonious numbers.

Anacreon is a great contrast to Pindar. His fancy, which has no great range, is employed only in suggesting familiar and luxurious pictures. He has no comprehension of the sublime of poetry, and little of the tender, delicate, or ingenuous in sentiment. He is a professed voluptuary, of loose and abandoned principles; and his compositions, though easy, graceful, and harmonious, are too immoral to find favour with the friends of virtue.

Of the Greek lyric poetry, if the epigram may be classed under that denomination, the collection called *Anthologia* has preserved a great many very beautiful specimens. With a few exceptions, they are free from that coarseness and obscenity which disgrace the compositions of the Roman epigrammatists, particularly Martial and Catullus. The Anthologia was compiled by a monk of the fourteenth century: but it consists almost entirely of ancient productions, and is altogether a valuable monument of the Greek literature and taste. The best of the modern epigrams may be traced up to that source, and the English and

* Noct. Att., l. xvii. c. 10.

French poets have frequently plundered the Anthologia without the least acknowledgment.*

Considering the Anthologia as affording the best examples of this species of composition, we may thence observe that the ancients did not altogether annex the same meaning that we do to the term epigram; which we consider as always displaying a point or witticism, consisting of a single thought, briefly and brilliantly expressed. The ancients required likewise brevity and unity of thought, but they did not consider point or witticism as essential to epigram. Martial and Catullus are frequently witty: but the principal characteristic of the Greek epigram is ingenuity and simplicity, or what the French term *naïveté*.

The era of dramatic composition among the Greeks is supposed to have commenced about 590 B. C.† Thespis, who is said to have been the inventor of tragedy,‡ was contemporary with Solon; and if the

* It is no inconsiderable testimony to the merits of the Greek epigram, that the great moralist, Dr. Samuel Johnson, sought a relief from the pains attendant on his death-bed, in translating into English and Latin verse some of the best epigrams of the Anthologia.

† Aristotle considers Homer as the founder of the drama among the Greeks—not as having himself written any composition strictly of a dramatic nature, but as having led the way to it, by his lively representations of life and manners, both in the more serious and graver aspects, and in the comic; his Iliad and Odyssey bearing the same relation to tragedy, that his *Margites* does to comedy.—*Arist. de Poet.* c. 4.

‡ Mr. Harris thus plausibly accounts for the priority of tragedy to comedy in the poetry of all nations. "It appears, that not only in Greece, but in other countries more barbarous, the first writings were in metre, and of an epic cast, recording wars, battles, heroes, ghosts; the marvellous always, and often the incredible. Men seemed to have thought the higher they soared, the more important they should appear; and that the common life which they then lived was a thing too contemptible to merit imitation. Hence it followed, that it was not till this common life was rendered respectable by

drama originated with the Athenians, it is equally certain that they brought it to a very high pitch of perfection. The Greek comedy has been divided into three distinct classes, the *old*, the *middle*, and the *new*. Of the old comedy, which is noted for the extreme freedom and severity of its satire, the principal dramatists were Eupolis, Cratinus, and Aristophanes.

> Eupolis atque Cratinus Aristophanesque poetæ,
> Atque alii quorum Comœdia prisca virorum est,
> Siquis erat dignus describi, quod malus ac fur,
> Quod mœchus foret, aut sicarius, aut alioqui
> Famosus, multa cum libertate notabant.*
>
> *Hor. Sat.* lib. i. sat. 4.

And it had been well if their satire had been confined to the vicious alone and notoriously profligate. We might excuse, when such were the sole objects of castigation, even the unbridled license with which they wielded the iron scourge of sarcasm. Unfortunately their censure was not so discriminating, as appears by the dramas of Aristophanes, yet preserved entire.

If it be true, that under the administration of Pericles at Athens, all compositions for the stage were submitted to the review of certain judges, whose approbation it was necessary to obtain before they were allowed to be performed, it is not easy to account for those gross immoralities and violations of common decency which are to be found in the comedies of Aristophanes. Of this author's composition, we have eleven dramatic pieces, which, it must be owned, do

more refined and polished manners, that men thought it might be copied, so as to gain them applause. Even in Greece itself, tragedy had attained its maturity many years before comedy, as may be seen by comparing the age of Sophocles and Euripides, with that of Philemon and Menander."

* "Eupolis, Cratinus, Aristophanes, and other old writers of comedy, used unbounded license in exposing the knave, the thief, the adulterer, the assassin, or any infamous character whomsoever."

not give a favourable opinion of the taste of the Athenians at this period of their highest national splendour.

It is true, that we discern exquisite knowledge of human nature in those dramas, and that they have high value, as throwing light on the manners and customs of the Athenians, and even on their political constitution. But there are coarseness of sentiment and ribaldry of expression in the comedies of Aristophanes, which to modern taste and manners appear extremely disgusting. We must presume, that even in the days of the author, such performances could have been relished only by the very dregs of the populace; and that what chiefly recommended them to these, was the malicious sarcasm and abuse which was thrown upon their superiors, often on the best and worthiest members of the commonwealth.

To the old comedy—of which the extreme license and scurrility became at length disgusting, as the manners of the Athenians became more refined—succeeded the middle comedy, which, retaining the spirit of the old, and its vigorous delineation of manners and character, banished from the drama all personal satire or abuse of living characters by name. The writers of this class were numerous, and we have several fragments remaining of their compositions, but no entire pieces. Of these fragments, Mr. Cumberland has published some valuable specimens, admirably translated, in the sixth volume of *The Observer*. Of these specimens, the passages taken from the comedies of Alexis, Antiphanes, Epicrates, Mnesimachus, Phœnicides, and Timocles, will give pleasure to every reader of taste.

Last came the *new comedy* of the Greeks, including in point of time a period of about thirty years—from the death of Alexander the Great to the death of Menander, the last, and, perhaps, the greatest ornament of the Grecian drama. In this short period, the Athenian stage was truly a school of morals; and, while comedy lost none of her characteristic excellence in

the just delineation of manners, she had the additional graces of tenderness, elegance, and decorum. Of this brilliant era, the chief dramatic writers were Menander, Philemon, Diphilus, Apollodorus, Philippides, and Posilippus.

In the comedies of Menander was found a vein of the most refined wit and pleasantry, which never transgressed the bounds of decency and strict morality. His object was at once the exemplary display of the charms of virtue, and the chastisement of vice; and employing, alternately, the grave and the jocose, attempering moral example with keen but elegant satire, he exhibited the most instructive as well as the justest representations of human nature. Quintilian and Plutarch* have deservedly enlarged on the merits of this excellent dramatic poet, expressing their opinion that he has eclipsed the reputation of all the other writers in the same department among the ancients. By the former of these authors, the plays of Menander are recommended as a school of eloquence for the formation of a perfect orator; so admirable is the skill of the poet, in painting the manners and passions in every condition and circumstance of life. The eulogium of Menander, by Quintilian, might, in modern times, be held as no exaggerated character of our immortal *Shakspeare*. How much is it to be regretted, that of all the works of this great master of the ancient drama, of which there were near one hundred comedies, there should, unfortunately, remain nothing more than a few detached passages preserved by Athenæus, Plutarch, Stobæus, and Eustathius! Yet even these justify the high character which the ancient critics have given of this poet; and we have yet a completer and more ample proof of his merits in the comedies of Terence, which

* Quint. l. x. c. i., and Plutarch. Comp. Aristoph. and Menand.

are now universally considered as little else than versions from Menander.*

Next in merit to Menander, and not inferior to him in fertility of genius, was Philemon, who is recorded to have written no less than ninety comedies. Of his remains, the few fragments preserved by Athenæus and Stobæus do not derogate from the character given of him by Quintilian and the ancient critics, as second, at least, in dramatical talents to the prince of the comic stage. In the same scale of merit stood Diphilus, of whom Clemens Alexandrinus and Eusebius give a high character in point of morals as well as comic humour. Of his works, as well as those of his rivals, Apollodorus, Philippides, and Posidippus, there remain a few fragments.

Time has happily spared to us more considerable remains of the tragic muse of the Greeks than of the comic, and fortunately those pieces which have been preserved, are the production of the three great ornaments of the drama, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Among the celebrated tragic poets, Æschylus ranks first in priority of time. Seventy years only had elapsed since the days of Thespis, when the Greek drama had no other stage for its exhibition than a wagon. The improvement that took place from that period to the time when Æschylus produced those pieces which were crowned at the Olympic games, must have been great indeed. This author is said to have written sixty-six tragedies, for thirteen of which he gained the first prize in that department of poetry. The tragedies of Æschylus abound in strokes of the true sublime; but his genius, not always regulated by good taste, frequently betrays him into the bombast: *Sublimis—gravis—et grandiloquus usque ad vitium*,† says Quintilian. He studied not in

* Mr. Cumberland, in the Observer, No. 149, has translated some of the fragments of Menander with great spirit and sufficient fidelity, as also one of Diphilus.

† "Sublime, grand, and lofty even to a fault."

his compositions that regularity of plan, and strict observance of the unities, which the works of the succeeding poets seem to have rendered essential to the Greek drama; but to this very circumstance we are indebted for the wild and romantic nature of his plots, and that terrible grandeur with which his characters are sometimes delineated. The high esteem which Aristophanes had for the talents of Æschylus, is demonstrated by that dispute which, in his comedy entitled The Frogs, he feigns to have taken place in the infernal regions between Euripides and Æschylus for the tragic chair. Bacchus, the judge of the controversy, gives a direct decision in favour of Æschylus; and Sophocles acquiesces in the judgment, and declares that though he himself is ready to contest the palm with Euripides, he yields it willingly to Æschylus.

Euripides and Sophocles were about fifty years posterior in time to Æschylus; though both of them had begun their dramatic career in his lifetime. The judgment of the critics, both of ancient and of modern times, is almost equally balanced between these great masters of the drama. Quintilian leaves the question undecided with respect to their poetical merits; but prefers Euripides, as affording a better practical model of oratory, as well as on the score of his admirable prudential, and moral lessons. Euripides is a great master of the passions, and with high skill in the excitement of the grander emotions of terror, rage, and madness, is yet more excellent in exciting the tender affections of grief and pity. In the judgment of Longinus, this poet had not a natural genius for the sublime; though the critic acknowledges that he is capable at times, when the subject demands it of working himself up to a very high elevation, both of thought and expression. This criticism is certainly fastidious in no small degree. If a poet has it in his power to rise to the sublime when his subject demands it, what better proof can we have of a natural genius for the

sublime? But how absurd to deny that the *Medea* is the work of a transcendent native genius for the sublime! As a moralist, Euripides ranks perhaps the highest among the ancient poets. He was the only dramatic writer of whom Socrates deigned to attend the representations. The singular esteem in which Cicero held him as a moral writer, he has strongly expressed in one of his letters to Tiro,* and it is a remarkable anecdote, that Cicero in the last moments of his life, when assassinated in his litter, was occupied in reading the *Medea*. It is well known that that great and good man expected his fate; and we must thence conclude that he thought no preparation for death more suitable than the excellent moral reflections of his favourite poet. Of seventy-five tragedies written by Euripides, there remain to us nineteen, and the fragment of a twentieth. Quintilian justly gives it as a decisive proof of the high merit of this great dramatist, that Menander admired and followed him as his model, though in a different species of the drama.†

Contemporary with Euripides was his great rival, Sophocles, who, in the judgment both of the ancient and modern critics, shares equally with the former the chief honours of the tragic muse. As the principal excellence of Euripides is judged to lie in the expression of the tender passions, so the genius of Sophocles has been thought more adapted to the grand, the terrible, and the sublime. Yet the latter has occasionally shown himself a great master in the pathetic. I know not that either the ancient or the modern drama can produce a passage more powerfully affecting, than the speech of Electra on receiving the urn which she is told contains the ashes of her brother Orestes:

Ω φιλτάτου μνημεῖον ἀνθρώπων ἐμοί, &c.
Soph. Elect., Act iv.

* Cic. Ep. ad Fam. lib. xvi. ep. 8.

† Hunc et admiratus maximè est, ut sæpe testatur et secutus quamquam in opere diverso, Menander. *Just Or.* l. x. c. 1

We perceive in the tragedies of Sophocles great knowledge of the human heart, together with a simplicity and chastity of expression in the general language of the characters, which greatly heightens his occasional strokes of the sublime. Of all the productions of the Greek stage which time has spared to us, that which is generally esteemed the most perfect is the Œdipus of Sophocles. There could not, perhaps, be devised a dramatic fable more perfectly suited to the excitement both of terror and pity than that of the unfortunate Œdipus; yet it is defective in one great point, which is a moral. There is no useful truth inculcated by the spectacle of a man reduced to the utmost pitch of human misery, and marked out as an object of the indignation and vengeance of the gods, for actions in which it is not possible to accuse him of criminality. I have formerly taken notice of this strange paradox in the ideas of the ancients with respect to morality,* and I will not repeat the observation.

The manner in which the dramatic compositions of the Greeks were performed has afforded much matter for learned inquiry, and given room to considerable diversity of opinion. It is well known that the ancient actors, both in the Greek and Roman theatres, wore masks suited to the characters they represented, of which the enlarged and distended features were calculated to be seen at a great distance; and the mouth was so constructed as to increase the sound of the voice like a speaking trumpet. The tragic declamation was loud, sonorous, and inflated, while the tone of the comic actors was nearer to the manner of ordinary discourse. The ancient tragedy may indeed be described, not as an imitation of nature, but as altogether an artificial composition, intended to produce a grand and imposing effect by the united power of music, dancing, strong and expressive gesticulation, and pompous declamation; the whole introduced through

* Supra, book i., ch. 8.

the medium of some interesting, but simple story, fitted by its nature to excite powerfully the emotions of terror and of pity. The ancient comedy, with the accompaniments of music and dancing, was an imitation of ordinary life, intended to inculcate good morals by just delineations of the laudable or faulty characters of mankind, as the more serious dramas of Menander and Terence; or to chastise vice by the ruder methods of satire, burlesque, and invective, as the comedies of Aristophanes and Plautus.

As the tragic and comic dramas were thus different in their nature, they were usually performed by different classes of actors.* Quintilian tells us that Æsopus declaimed much more gravely than Roscius, because the former was accustomed to act tragedy, and the latter comedy.† The dresses and decorations in the two species of drama were likewise altogether different. The tragic actor used the *cothernus*, or high-soled buskin, which increased his height some inches, and also a stuffed dress to give a proportional size and breadth to the figure.‡ The comic actor trod the stage with the *soccus*, or low-heeled slipper, and an ordinary garb suited to the character in real life. It

* Plato, 3 Dial. de Republ.

† Roscius citatior, Æsopus gravior fuit; quod ille comœdias, hic tragœdias egit.—*Just. Or.*, lib. xi., c. 3.

Roscius was more animated, Æsop more grave; Wherefore, the former applied himself to comedy, the latter to tragedy.

‡ Lucian gives a most ludicrous picture of the costume of the tragic actors and their turgid manner of performance, in his dialogue on stage dancing.—*Peri Orcheseos.* "What more absurd and ridiculous spectacle can there be, than to see a man artfully drawing out his figure to a most unnatural length, stalking in upon high shoes, his head covered with a fearful mask, with a mouth gaping wide, as if he was about to devour the spectators; not to mention his stuffed belly and chest, extended to give the long figure a proportional size; then his bellowing and ranting, sometimes blustering and thumping, then singing iambics, or musically whining out the most grievous calamities."

was therefore corresponding to their figures that the former declaimed in a loud and solemn tone or mouthed his part, while the latter spoke in a natural tone and manner: *Comœdus sermocinatur*, says Apuleius, *Tragœdus vociferatur.*

There are some circumstances regarding the exhibition of the ancient drama, on which the modern critics are not agreed. There is good reason to believe that both the comedy and tragedy of the Greeks and Romans were set to music, and the greater part, if not the whole, sung by the actors, or spoken in musical intonation, like the recitative of the modern Italian operas. Not to mention the etymology of the words *komodia* and *tragodia*, plainly denoting the composition to be of the nature of song, there are many passages of the ancient authors which countenance the foregoing opinion.*

The ancient actors used in their performance a great deal of gesticulation, which was requisite from the immense size of their theatres in order to supply the defect of the voice, which, even with the contrivance before mentioned to increase its sound, was still too weak to be distinctly heard over so large a space. A violent and strongly marked gesticulation was, therefore, in some degree, necessary; and this led to a very extraordinary practice in the latter period of the Roman theatre: namely, that there were two persons employed in the representation of one character. Livy, the historian, relates the particular incident which gave rise to this practice. The poet Livius Andronicus, in acting upon the stage in one of his own

* Suetonis, in speaking of the Emperor Nero, who piqued himself on his talents as a player, and used frequently to exhibit on the stage, says, "*Tragœdias quoque cantavit personatus. Inter cætera cantavit Canacen parturientem* (a strange part for his imperial majesty to perform!) *Orestem matricidam, Oedipodem excæcatum, Herculem insanum.* Some of these characters, it must be allowed, were sufficiently consonant to their actor.

plays, was called by the plaudits of the audience to repeat some favourite passages so frequently, that his voice became inaudible through hoarseness, and he requested that a boy might be allowed to stand in front of the musicians, and recite the part, while he himself performed the consonant gesticulations. It was remarked, says the historian, that his action was much more free and forcible, from being relieved of the labour of utterance; and hence it became customary, adds Livy, to allow this practice in monologues, or soliloquies, and to require both voice and gesture from the same actor only in the colloquial parts. We have it on the authority of Lucian, that the same practice came to be introduced upon the Greek stage. Formerly, says that author, the same actors both recited and gesticulated; but as it was observed that the continual motion, by affecting the breathing of the actor, was an impediment to distinct recitation, it was judged better to make one actor recite and another gesticulate. For farther information upon this matter I refer to a very ingenious and ample disquisition by the Abbé Du Bos in his *Reflections Critiques sur la Poësie et sur la Peinture*—critical reflections on poetry and painting. Tom. i. sect. 42.

In treating of the Greek drama, it would be an omission not to mention a species of dramatic composition—of a nature very much inferior to the proper tragedy and comedy of the ancients; but which, at length, in the corruption of taste, became greatly in fashion both among the Greeks and Romans, and seems, indeed, to have been carried to as high a degree of perfection as the nature of the composition would admit of. What I speak of is the *mimes* and *pantomimes*. The etymology of the words shows that this species of entertainment was considered as a sort of mimicry or ludicrous imitation. The *mimes* originally made a part of the ancient comedy, and the mimic actors played or exhibited grotesque dances between the acts of the comedy. As this entertainment

was highly relished, the mimes began to rest on their own merits, and setting themselves up in opposition to the comedians, delighted the vulgar by making burlesque parodies on the more regular representations of the stage. Some of these pieces were published, and were of such merit as humorous compositions, that the philosopher Plato did not disdain to confess his admiration of them.

The pantomimes differed from the mimes in this respect, that they consisted solely of gesticulation, and seem to have been very nearly of the same tenure with our modern pantomimes. What is termed in France the Italian comedy, seems, on the other hand, to hold a very strict affinity with the ancient mimes. Both the one and the other, if we may judge from the name, were of Greek origin; but they were introduced into Rome toward the end of the commonwealth—and, as the spectacle was greatly relished, the art was proportionally cultivated and improved. The performances became gradually more refined and chaste; and that which was at first little better than low buffoonery, began at last to aspire at the merits of the higher drama, tragedy and comedy. The tragedy of Œdipus was in the reign of Augustus performed at Rome by the pantomimes in dumb show, and that so admirably as to draw tears from the whole spectators. The chief actors in this department were Pylades and Bathyllus; and the contentions excited by the partisans of these mimics arose at length to such a pitch, that Augustus thought proper to admonish Pylades in private, and caution him to live on good terms with his rival, for the sake of the public peace. Pylades contented himself with replying, that it was for the emperor's best interest, that the public should find nothing more material to engross their thoughts than him and Bathyllus. The chief merit of Pylades, as Athenæus informs us, lay in the comic pantomime, and that of Bathyllus in the tragic. But however great the perfection to which these performances were

carried by the ancients, they were always regarded as a spurious species of the drama, indicating the corruption of a more liberal art.*

The genius of the Greeks was in no department of literary composition more distinguished than in history. In attending to the progress of the arts and sciences, it has been generally remarked that there are particular ages in which the human mind seems to take a strong bent or direction to one class of pursuits in preference to all others. Emulation may in a great measure account for this: for when one artist or one learned man becomes confessedly eminent, others are excited by a natural bias to the same studies and pursuits in which he has attained reputation. In treating of the fine arts among the Greeks, we remarked that extraordinary constellation of eminent artists which adorned the age of Pericles. We shall observe a similar phenomenon in the age of Leo the Tenth. In like manner we find the ablest of the Greek historians all nearly contemporary with each other. Herodotus, the most ancient of the Greek historians of merit, died 413 years before the Christian era; Thucydides 391 before that period; and Xenophon was about twenty years younger than Thucydides.

Herodotus, a native of Halicarnassus, one of the Greek cities of Asia, has written the joint history of the Greeks and Persians, from the time of Cyrus the Great (599 B. C.) to the battles of Platæa and Mycale, a period of one hundred and twenty years.* He treats incidentally likewise of the history of several other nations—of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Medes,

* Lucian is a warm apologist of the art of pantomime in his dialogue Peri Orcheseos. And his contemporary, Apuleius, has given, in his florid style of writing, an amusing account of an ancient pantomime on the subject of the judgment of Paris. Metamorph. l. x.

* Herodotus gives a very brief detail of the preceding period, from the reign of Gyges, king of Lydia (718 B. C.) to the birth of Cyrus: but the history properly commences with Cyrus.

and Lydians. His account of Egypt, in particular, is extremely minute and curious. He had travelled into that country, and besides what he relates from actual knowledge and observation, he was at much pains to obtain from the priests every degree of information they could give him of the antiquities and of the manners and customs of the country. He likewise visited the greatest part of Greece, travelling thence into Thrace and Scythia; and in Asia he made a journey to Babylon and Tyre, and the most considerable places in Syria and Palestine. With the object of writing his history, he seems to have been most solicitous to collect information from every quarter; and it is his greatest fault that he has not been sufficiently scrupulous in his admission of many idle and absurd anecdotes, which he had too much good sense to believe, and yet thought not unworthy of being recorded. It is true, that for the most part he puts the reader on his guard in such matters as he considers to be either palpably fabulous or not sufficiently authenticated; but the dignity of history is debased even by the admission of such matter, under whatever caution it is presented. It is not to be denied, however, that the merits of Herodotus are of no common degree. When we consider him as the earliest writer of regular history among the ancients whose works have been preserved; while we observe the valuable and instructive details which we find in him, and no other historian, and remark that the subsequent writers of reputation have rested for many material facts on his authority; while we attend to the unaffected ease and simplicity of his narrative, the graceful flow of his style, and even the charm of his antiquated Ionic diction—there is perhaps no historian of antiquity who deserves a higher estimation.* Several of the ancient writers have impeached the character of Herodotus in point

* In Herodoto, cum omnia, (ut ego quidem sentio, leniter fluunt, tum ipsa διάλεκτος habet eam jucunditatem ut latentes

of veracity; but none in such severe terms as Plutarch, who has written a pretty long dissertation, expressly to show the want of faith and the malignity of the historian. The fact is, that Plutarch bore strong enmity against Herodotus for a supposed aspersion cast by that historian on the honour of his country. Herodotus had related that in the expedition of Xerxes, the Thebans, apprehensive of the fate of their own territory, deserted the common cause and joined the Persians. The fact was true; but Plutarch, who was a native of Chæronea, one of the Theban states, could not bear this imputation on his country, and wreaked his spleen on the historian in the treatise beforementioned. The facts which he instances are in general very trifling, and are chiefly such stories as the historian owns he has related on dubious authority. Herodotus is said to have recited history to the Greeks assembled at the solemn festival of the *Panathenaia*, or, as others say, at the Olympic games—an expedient for the good policy of which Lucian gives him credit, as there could be no means half so speedy of making known his genius and circulating his reputation. Those public recitations had an admirable effect. It was this display of the talents of Herodotus and the fame which attended it, that kindled the enthusiasm of genius in the young Thucydides.

Thucydides was a native of Athens, and of an illustrious family; being allied, by the female line, to the kings of Thrace, and by the male, a descendant from Cimon and Miltiades. A contemporary, and familiarly acquainted with many of the most remarkable men of his country, with Socrates, Plato, Pericles, Alcibiades, it was no wonder that he felt the noble emulation of

etiam numeros complexa videatu.—*Quint. de Just, Or. lib.* ix. c. 4.

"As I think, everything in Herodotus flows gently, and his language has such gracefulness, that it would seem to consist of hidden numbers."

raising himself a name in future ages. He was bred to the profession of arms, and distinguished himself honourably, in the beginning of the war of Peloponnesus; but having miscarried in an attempt to relieve Amphipolis, then blockaded by the Lacedæmonians, he was banished, on that account, from his country, for the space of twenty years. He retired to the island of Ægina, and employed the long period of his exile in composing his history of the Peloponnesian war, of the progress and detail of which, besides his own personal knowledge, he spared no pains to obtain the most accurate information. Introductory to his principal subject, he gives a short view of the Grecian history, from the departure of Xerxes, to the commencement of the war of Peloponnesus, which connects his history with that of Herodotus: but he brings down the detail of the war only to the twenty-first year. The history of the remaining six years was written by Theopompus and Xenophon.

Thucydides is deservedly esteemed for the authenticity of his facts, his impartiality, and fidelity. We are, indeed, involuntarily led from his narrative to favour the cause of his countrymen, the Athenians; of whom, however, it may be presumed, he had no reason to exaggerate the merits. The style of Thucydides is a contrast to that of Herodotus. The eloquence of the latter is copious and diffuse, and his expression, never rising to the elevated and magnificent, is chiefly remarkable for its simplicity and perspicuity. The former has a closeness and energy of style, which is equally lively and energetic*. Like

* Densus et brevis, et semper instans sibi Thucydides: dulcis et candidus et fusus Herodotus; ille concitatis, hic remissis affectibus melior; ille concionibus, hic sermonibus: ille vi, hic voluptate.—*Quintil.* l. x. c. i.

"Thucydides, condensed, brief, and always earnest: Herodotus, harmonious, brilliant, and diffuse; the former excelling in the portraiture of the turbulent, the latter of the gentle passions; the one in public harangues the other in the discourse

Tacitus, he rises often to great sublimity of expression, and, like that author too, his diction is so compressed, that we find, often, as many ideas as there are words.* His narrative does not convey his meaning easily, and without effort. He makes the reader pause upon his sentences, and keeps his attention on the stretch to apprehend the full import of his expressions. That effort of attention, however, is always amply rewarded, by the wisdom and sagacity of his observations, the intimate knowledge he shows of his subject, and the perfect confidence which he inspires of his own candour and sagacity.

There is no other among the Greek writers who has shone more in the department of history, than Xenophon. This author was about thirty years younger than Thucydides; contemporary with many of the most illustrious men of Greece; and educated in the school of Socrates. He accompanied the younger Cyrus in his war against his brother Artaxerxes, and in the latter part of that expedition, commanded the Greek army in the service of Cyrus. We know the fatal issue of that enterprise, in which Cyrus fell by the hand of his brother;—a just reward for his unnatural and criminal ambition.† The retreat of the ten thousand Greeks, under Xenophon, gave him great fame as an able commander, eminently endowed with

of private life; the former more energetic, the latter more pleasing."

* Thucydides omnes dicendi artificio meâ sententiâ facile vicit, ut verborum prope numerum sententiarum numero consequatur: ita porro verbis aptus et pressus, ut nescias utrum res oratione, an verba sententiis illustrentur.—*Cicero*, lib. 2. De Orat.

"Thucydides, I think, greatly surpasses all other authors in the skilful use of language; inasmuch as for every word there is an appropriate sentiment; and he is moreover, so happy in his choice of words and so sententious, that you are at a loss which to admire most, his matter or his language, his sentiments or his words."

† See supra, book ii. chap. 2.

persevering courage, fertile in resources, and possessing that happy talent of address, and that popular eloquence, which are fitted for gaining the ready obedience and the confidence of an army. The narrative of this remarkable expedition, written by himself, has justly entitled him to a high rank among the historians of antiquity.* His historical, political, and philosophical works are numerous.† Among these, one of the most known, though certainly not of the highest merit, is the *Cyropædia*, or Education of Cyrus; a fanciful composition, which blends history and romance, and is equally unsatisfying in the one point of view as the other. It is supposed that the author meant to exhibit the picture of an accomplished prince. But if that was his aim, to what purpose those frivolous and childish tales of the nursery, those insipid jests, and that endless *verbiage* and haranguing upon the most ordinary and trifling occasions?

Xenophon was a man of strict virtue and probity, of strong religious sentiments, referring all to the watchful administration of the Deity, but prone to the superstitious belief of auguries and omens. As a writer, in point of style, he is a model of easy, smooth, and unaffected composition; and his pure Attic dialect has infinite grace, and a singular perspicuity or transparency of expression, which presents the thought at once to the reader's mind, and leaves him no leisure to attend to the medium through which it is conveyed:—a supreme excellence of style, and rare, be-

* See supra, book ii. chap. 2.

† He wrote, besides the Anabasis and the Cyropædia, a continuation, in seven books, of the Greek history of Thucydides; a Panegyric on Agesilaus; two treatises on the Lacedæmonian and Athenian Republics; The Apology for Socrates; and four books of the *Memorabilia* of that philosopher; a treatise on Domestic Economy; The Banquet; Hiero, or the Economy of a Monarchy; besides some smaller essays on Imposts, Hunting, Horsemanship; and some Epistles of which we have only fragments.

cause ignorantly undervalued, in competition with point, brilliancy and rhetorical embellishment. *Quid ego commemorem* (says Quintilian) *Xenophontis jucunditatem illam inaffectatam, sed quam nulla possit affectatio consequi—ut ipsæ finxisse sermonem Gratiæ videantur?**

The three historians I have mentioned had the fortune to live in that age which witnessed the highest national glory of their country. But Greece, even in the days of her degeneracy as a nation, produced some historians of uncommon merit. Polybius lived in the second century before the birth of Christ; at the time when the only surviving spirit of the Greeks was that which animated the small states of Achaia. His father, a native of Megalopolis in Arcadia, was prætor of the Achæan republic, and executed that important office with great honour. Polybius was trained from his youth to public affairs, for which his abilities eminently qualified him. He accompanied his father on an embassy to the court of the Ptolemys of Egypt, and afterward went himself as ambassador to Rome, where he resided for several years. During that period he employed himself most assiduously in the study of the antiquities, laws, and customs of the Romans; and having permission from the senate to search into the records preserved in the capitol, obtained a more exact and profound acquaintance with the history and constitution of the Roman republic than any of its own citizens. It was probably by the advice of the great Scipio and Lælius, who were his intimate friends, that he formed the splendid design of composing a history of Rome, which should comprehend that of all the contemporary nations with which the affairs of the republic were connected.

* "Why should I mention that unaffected sweetness in Xenophon, which no affectation could ever reach—So that the Graces themselves seem to have modelled his composition?"

Preparatory however to this great undertaking, he resolved to travel into every country where lay the scene of any of those events he designed to record. In that view he visited most of the southern nations of Europe, a considerable part of Asia, and the coast of Africa. He explored himself the traces of Hannibal in his march across the Alps, and made himself acquainted with all the Gallic nations in their vicinity. In short, no writer was ever more scrupulous in the investigation of facts, or more perfectly acquainted with the scenes he had to describe. Thus his history is deservedly of the very highest authority among the compositions of the ancients. It is much to be lamented that so small a portion should remain of so valuable a work. Of forty books which he wrote, beginning from the commencement of the second Punic war, and carried down to the reduction of Macedonia into a Roman province, we have only the first five books entire, and extracts, or rather an abridgment, of the following twelve, with some detached fragments from the remaining books preserved by other writers. We see in every page of Polybius the intelligent officer, the sagacious politician, and the man of probity and candour. He neither disguises the virtues of an enemy, nor palliates the faults of a friend. His description of military operations is clear and distinct, and his judgment is everywhere conspicuous in reasoning on the counsels which directed all public measures, and the causes which led to their success or failure. The style of Polybius has, indeed, no claim to the praise of eloquence. Dionysius of Halicarnassus reproaches him with carelessness in the choice of his expressions, and inattention to the rules of good writing: but he is everywhere perspicuous, and the sterling value of his matter abundantly compensates his defects in point of rhetorical composition.

The next who deserves to be mentioned among the Greek historians of eminence, is Diodorus Siculus, who, in the latter period of the commonwealth and in the age

of Augustus, composed at Rome his excellent General History, a work of thirty years' labour, of which only fifteen out of forty books have been preserved. The first five books relate to the fabulous periods, but record likewise a great deal of curious historical matter relative to the antiquities of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, and Greeks. The next five books are wanting. The eleventh book begins with the expedition of Xerxes into Greece, and continues the Grecian history, and that of the contemporary nations, down to the age of Alexander the Great. The author is particularly ample on the affairs of the Romans and Carthaginians. The work of Diodorus appears to have been in great esteem with the writers of antiquity. The elder Pliny is high in his commendation; Justin Martyr ranks him among the most illustrious of the Greek historians; and Eusebius places greater weight upon his authority than that of any other writer. The modern writers have blamed him for chronological inaccuracy. It is not to be denied that the History of Diodorus is replete with valuable matter, and that his style, though not to be compared to that of Xenophon or Thucydides, is pure, perspicuous, and free from all affectation.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus deserves to be ranked among the most eminent of the Greek writers of history, both in regard to the importance of his matter and the merit of his style, which, though deficient in simplicity, is often extremely eloquent. Dionysius came to Rome in the reign of Augustus, and continuing to reside there for twenty-two years, employed that time in the most diligent research into the ancient records, in conversation with the most learned men of that age, and in the perusal of the older writers, whence he collected the materials of that most valuable work which he composed in twenty books, entitled *Roman Antiquities.** Of these only the first

* He gives, in the Introduction to his work, an ample ac

eleven books have been preserved, in which the origin and foundation of the Roman state are treated with great amplitude, and the history of the republic brought down to the end of the decemvirate. He has been censured for dealing in the marvellous; but the censure applies equally to Livy, who has repeated the same stories, without, it is probable, either believing them himself or expecting his readers to do so. Those who write of the origin of nations have but scanty materials of genuine history, and are thus tempted to eke them out with the popular fables. And these it is sometimes important to know, as they have frequently given rise to ceremonies and customs both of a religious and civil nature, of which the origin may therefore be considered as belonging to authentic history. The point in which Dionysius is more justly to be blamed is his fondness for system, and the desire he has to persuade his readers of his own sagacity in discovering, as he imagines, a deep and refined policy in the founders of the Roman state, in all those constitutional regulations regarding the powers and rights of the different orders, the functions of the magistrates, &c., which, in reality, could only have arisen gradually and progressively, as circumstances pointed out and required them. Of this error of Dionysius, I shall have another occasion to take some notice.

There are few of the ancient historians who deserve a higher rank in the estimation of the moderns than Arrian, whose history of the expedition of Alexander is the most authentic narrative we have of the exploits of that great conqueror, as he is also the best expositor of the real motives and designs of that extraordinary man, of whose policy such opposite judgments have been formed. The narrative of Arrian, as he informs us in his preface, is founded on the accounts givens by two of Alexander's principal officers,

count of all the sources of information from which his history is compiled.

Aristobulus and Ptolemy Lagus, afterward the sovereign of Egypt. No historical record, therefore, has a better claim to the public faith. The brief account of India by Arrian, which includes the curious journal of Nearchus's voyage, is likewise extremely interesting and instructive. The style of Arrian, formed on that of Xenophon, is a very happy imitation of that author's simplicity, purity, and precision. Arrian's merits are not solely those of an accurate and able historian; he was likewise a profound philosopher. It is to his writings that we owe all our knowledge of the sublime morality of Epictetus, of whom he was the favourite disciple, and has diligently recorded the philosophical lessons and maxims of his master. The short treatise entitled the Enchiridion of Epictetus, which is a complete epitome of the stoical morality, was written by Arrian, and, from its beautiful precision, is perhaps on the whole a more valuable memorial of that great philosopher than the four books which Arrian has collected of his discourses.

The last author I shall mention of those properly to be classed among the Greek historians is Plutarch, and perhaps there is no writer of antiquity of equal value in point of important matter and useful information. Plutarch was a Bœotian by birth, a native of Chæronea, a small state of which his father was chief magistrate, with the title of archon. He was born in the 48th year of the Christian era, under the reign of the emperor Claudius. In his youth he travelled into Egypt, and while in that country, studied under Ammonius, a celebrated teacher of philosophy at Alexandria. Returning thence into Greece, he visited all the schools of the philosophers in that country, and, finally, with a mind replete with useful knowledge and an extensive acquaintance with men and manners, he repaired to Rome, for the purpose of examining the public records and collecting materials for the lives of the illustrious men of Italy and Greece. The reputation he had

acquired as a man of great erudition procured him the acquaintance of all the learned, and introduced him to the notice of the emperor Trajan, who honoured him with high marks of his favour and friendship, and conferred on him the proconsular government of Illyria. A public life, however, was irksome to Plutarch, whose chief enjoyment lay in the pursuits of literature and philosophy. He returned after the death of Trajan to his native city of Chæronea, where he passed the remaining years of a long life in discharging the office of its chief magistrate, in the composition of his excellent writings, and in the continual practice of all the active and social virtues. The Lives of Illustrious Men, written by Plutarch, must upon the whole be ranked among the most valuable works which remain to us of the ancients. He is the only author who introduces us to an intimate and familiar acquaintance with those great men whose public exploits and political characters we find indeed in other historians, but of whose individual features as men, and of their manners in domestic, private, and social intercourse, we should be utterly ignorant, were it not for his descriptive paintings, and the truly characteristic anecdotes which he records of them. What, if at times the biographer is chargeable with a little garrulity, and a too scrupulous minuteness in the detail of circumstances not of the highest importance? So natural is the desire felt by the ingenuous mind of knowing everything that concerns a great and illustrious character, that we can much more easily forgive the writer who is cheerfully lavish of the information he has collected, and at times descends even to trifling particulars, than him who, from a proud feeling of the dignity of authorship, is fastidiously sparing of his stores, and disdains to be ranked among the collectors of anecdote.

A great charm of Plutarch's writings is the admirable vein of morality which pervades all his compositions. Every sentiment proceeds from the heart, and

forcibly persuades the reader of the amiable candour, worth, and integrity of the writer. While his biographical details contain the most valuable part of the ancient history of Greece and Rome, his moral writings include the sum of all the ancient ethics. Perhaps it was no exaggerated estimate of his merits made by Theodore Gaza, when he declared that if every trace of ancient learning was to perish, and he had it in his power to preserve one single book from the works of the profane writers, his choice would fall upon Plutarch.

The style of this author, though in the judgment of the best critics, neither polished nor pure, is at all times energetic; and, on those occasions when the subject demands it, rises frequently to great eloquence.

An ancient Greek epigram of Agathias records the high esteem which the Roman people entertained for this excellent writer, in erecting a statute to his honour.*

* The epigram is thus translated by Dryden :—
"Bœotian Plutarch, to thy deathless praise
Does martial Rome this graceful statue raise;
Because both Greece and she thy fame have shared,
Their heroes written, and their lives compared.
But thou thyself could never write thy own;
Their lives have *parallels*, but thine has none.'

CHAPTER IX.

GREEK PHILOSOPHY—Ionic Sect—Thales—Anaximander—Anaximenes—Anaxagoras—Italic Sect—Pythagoras—Empedocles, &c.,—Eleatic Sect—Zeno—Leucippus—Democritus—Heraclitus—Socrates—Cyrenaic Sect—Aristippus—Cynics—Diogenes—Megaric Sect—Plato—Peripatetics—Aristotle—Skeptics—Pyrrho—Stoics—Epicureans—Reflections.

I HAVE already remarked that one considerable effect of the public games and festivals of the Greeks was the propagation and advancement of the literary spirit. The Olympic and other solemn games of the Greeks were not only the field of martial and athletic exercises, but of the contests for the palm of literature. Those immense assemblies were the stated resort of the poets, the historians, the rhapsodists, and even the philosophers.

After the days of Homer and Hesiod, the increasing relish for poetical composition gave rise to a set of men termed *rhapsodists*, whose original employment was to travel from one city to another, frequenting public entertainments and solemn festivals, and reciting works of the poets which they had committed to memory. As the early poets were the first teachers of the sciences, those rhapsodists became commentators on their works, and expositors of their doctrines. The youth, who resorted to them for instruction, dignified their masters with the title of Sophists or professors of wisdom, and these sophists soon became the founders of different sects or schools of philosophy.

The history of the ancient philosophy, if we consider how small a portion it embraced of useful knowledge, and yet how ardent the zeal of its teachers, and how keen the controversies of the different sects, affords on the whole a mortifying picture of the caprice and weakness of the human mind: but on these very

accounts, no subject of contemplation is more fitted to subdue in man those arrogant ideas of his own abilities, and of the all-sufficiency of his intellecual powers to subject the whole phenomena both of the natural and moral world to his limited reason and understanding.

The most ancient school of philosophy was that founded by Thales of Miletus, about 640 years before the Christian era, and termed the Ionic sect, from the country of its founder. Thales is said to have learned a great part of his knowledge in Egypt, as the ancients were fond of attributing the rudiments of all wisdom to that happy quarter. He became celebrated for his knowledge in geometry and astronomy; but the former of these sciences must be supposed to have been at that time in mere infancy, when one of Thales's discoveries is said to have been, that all right lines passing through the centre of a circle divide it into two equal parts. Yet Thales made some bold and fortunate conjectures in the science of astronomy. He conjectured this earth to be a sphere, and that it revolved round the sun. He believed the fixed stars to be so many suns encircled with other planets like our earth: he believed the moon's light to be a reflection of the sun's from a solid surface: and if we may trust the testimony of ancient authors, he was able to calculate eclipses, and actually predicted that famous eclipse of the sun 601 years before the birth of Christ, which separated the armies of the Medes and Lydians at the moment of an engagement. The metaphysical opinions of Thales are but imperfectly known. He supposed the world to be framed by the Deity out of the original element of water, and animated by his essence as the body is by the soul; that the Deity therefore resided in every portion of space; and that this world was only a great temple, where the sight of everything around him reminded man of that Great Being which inhabited and pervaded it.* As a spe-

* Thales—homines existimare oportere, omnia quæ cerner-

cimen of the moral doctrines of Thales we have the following excellent opinions and precepts: "Neither the crimes of bad men, nor even their thoughts, are concealed from the gods. Health of body, a moderate fortune, and a cultivated mind, are the chief ingredients of happiness. Parents may expect from their children that obedience which they themselves paid to their parents. Stop the mouth of slander by prudence. Take care not to commit the same fault yourself which you censure in others."*

The disciples of the ancient plilosophers frequently made bold innovations on the doctrines of their masters. Anaximander, the disciple and successor of Thales, who first committed the tenets of the Ionic school to writing, taught that all things are in a state of continual change; that there is a constant succession of worlds; and that while some are daily tending to dissolution others are forming. Anaximander is said to have been the first constructor of the sphere, to have delineated the limits of the earth and sea, and to have invented the gnomon for pointing the hours by the shadow on the sun-dial. His contemporary Anaximenes, of the same school, believed the Divinity to reside in the air, which he likewise made to be the original and constituent principle of all the other elements.

The most intelligible and rational opinions of any philosopher of this school were those of Anaxagoras; and, as deviating most from the vulgar errors and superstition, he was accused of impiety. He taught that the first efficient principle of all things was an immaterial and intelligent Being, existing from all eternity; that the *substratum*, or subject of his operations, was

ent Deorum esse plena; fore enim omnes castiores, velutique in fanis essent, maxime religiosi.—*Cic. de Nat. Deor.* l. 2. "It was the sentiment of Thales, that we should consider everything we behold filled with the divine nature; for all men should be devout, and under the influence of a reverential awe, as being in the temple of the gods."

* Diog. Laert. in Vita Thal.

matter, which likewise existed from al. eternity in a chaotic state, comprehending the confused rudiments of all different substances, which the intelligent mind of the Creator first separated, and then combined for the formation of the universe, and of all bodies animate and inanimate. It is true that Thales propagated the doctrine of an eternal mind, the Creator and Ruler of the universe; but he, like most of the ancient philosophers, seemed to consider this mind as united to matter, which was animated by it, as the body is by the soul. Anaxagoras regarded the mind of the Creator to be altogether distinct from matter; incapable of being included in space or substance of any kind, and of a nature entirely pure and spiritual. But if the general principles of Anaxagoras' philosophy were correct and rational, when he came to particulars, his notions partook of the vulgar absurdities. He conjectured the stars to be stones, which the rapid movement of the ether had whirled up into the region of fire. The sun he supposed to be a mass of red-hot iron, somewhat bigger than the Peloponnesus; an opinion, we are told, which led to a charge of impiety, and was punished by sentence of banishment and a fine of five talents; though Pericles, who had been Anaxagoras's pupil, stood forth on that occasion as his defender. His successors of the Ionic school were Diogenes of Apollonia, and Archelaus; the latter, the master of Socrates, who thence, in strict arrangement, should be recorded among the philosophers of the Ionic sect; but as this great man made a signal revolution in philosophy, I delay to mention his doctrines and opinions, till I give a brief account of the notions of his predecessors.

Soon after the Ionic arose the Italic sect, so termed from the country where Pythagoras, its founder, is said to have first taught. Pythagoras is generally believed to have been a native of Samos; but the time in which he flourished is quite uncertain. All that Brucker concludes, from comparing the different accounts, is, that his era may be placed somewhere be-

tween the forty-third and fifty-third olympiad; that is to say, near six centuries before the birth of Christ. Pythagoras travelled into Egypt, where he spent, as is said, no less than twenty-two years in the study of the sciences, as well as of the secret doctrines of the priests. After the invasion of that country by Cambyses, he was carried among the captives to Babylon, where he increased his stores of wisdom by the conversation of the magi. Thence he is said to have travelled into India, to acquaint himself with the doctrines of the Gymnosophists. Returning into his native country of Samos, he chose to escape the tyranny of its sovereign by migrating into Italy, where he established a school at Crotona, and signally contributed by his doctrines and example to reform the manners of that dissolute city. In imitation of the Egyptian priests, Pythagoras professed two different kinds of doctrine, the one accommodated to vulgar use, and the other reserved for the private ear of his favourite disciples. The object of the former was morality; the latter consisted of many mysteries which we are probably at no loss for being very little acquainted with. Five years of silence were requisite for preparing his scholars for the participation of these secrets. These disciples formed among themselves a sort of community; they lived all in the same house together with their wives and children; they had their goods in common, and their time was parcelled out and appropriated to various exercises of mind and body. Music was in high esteem with them, as a corrective of the passions; and they had one kind of music for the morning to awaken and excite the faculties, and another for the evening to relax and compose them. The notion which Pythagoras inculcated of the soul's transmigration through different bodies, made his disciples strictly abstain from animal food. As a proof that Plutarch, though commonly regarded by the critics as an unpolished writer, was not destitute of eloquence, we might desire any one to read that short oration of his peri sar-

kophagias (*concerning the eating of flesh*); an apology for the Pythagoreans abstaining from the flesh of animals, which there is a beautiful paraphrase in the *Emile* of Rousseau; an address to the feelings which would almost make us believe ourselves monsters, for indulging an appetite so cruel and unnatural.

The main object of the philosophy of Pythagoras was to mortify and subdue the corporeal part of our nature by a certain prescribed course of discipline, and thus to prepare and fit the intellectual part for its proper function, the search of immutable truth, the contemplation of the divine nature, and the nature of the human soul. The long silence enjoined to his disciples accustomed them to mental abstraction. The sciences of arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy, were sedulously cultivated; but whether as considered to be parts of the preparatory discipline, or as the objects of that discipline, seems to be a little uncertain. The latter would appear the more probable supposition, for this reason, that the philosopher taught that much mysterious and hidden truth was contained in certain arithmetical numbers and geometrical and musical proportions, which he communicated only to the higher and more advanced class of his disciples. Pythagoras regarded the human soul as consisting of two parts—the one a sensitive, which is common to a man and the inferior animals; the other a rational and divine, which is common to man with the Deity, and is indeed a part of the divine nature. The first perishes with the body, of which it is an inseparable adjunct; the other survives and is immortal; but after the death of one body it enters into another, and so passes through an endless series of transmigrations. It is punished by degradation into the body of an inferior animal, and thus suffers a temporary suspension of its rational and intellectual nature. It was this notion which led to abstinence from the flesh of animals. It is uncertain whether Pythagoras committed any of his doctrines to

writing. What remains under his name is commonly believed to have been the writing of some of his disciples. The Golden Verses, on which Hierocles has written a commentary, and which contain the principal moral tenets of the Pythagorean philosophy, are, from the polished structure of the verse, evidently of a much later age than that of the philosopher. They have been attributed with some probability to Epicharmus, who lived about 440 B. C.

Of the Pythagorean or Italic sect, there were many philosophers of reputation:—among others, Empedocles of Agrigentum, who attained to considerable eminence in physical science, and who is said to have thrown himself into the crater of Mount Etna, either from the desire of exploring the cause of its eruptions, or of propagating the belief that the gods had caught him up into heaven; it is a wiser and more charitable supposition, that he owed his death to a laudable but rash curiosity. Epicharmus of Agrigentum, the supposed author of the *Aurea Carmina*, was likewise a teacher of the Pythagorean philosophy, and attempted to render its doctrines popular by introducing them to the public through the medium of the drama; a project which gave offence to the graver teachers of wisdom, but procured this philosopher a more extensive reputation; for his comedies were so excellent, that Plautus did not disdain to borrow from them. Archytas of Tarentum was likewise of the Pythagorean school. He is said to have suggested that division of the ten predicaments, which was afterward adopted by Aristotle. It is as an able geometrician and astronomer that Horace has embalmed his memory and recorded his unhappy fate:—

"Te maris et terræ, numeroque carentis arenæ
Mensorem cohibent, Archyta,
Pulveris exigui prope litus parva mantinum
Munera, nec quicquam tibi prodest

Aerias tentasse domos, animoque rotundum
Percurrisse polum morituro."*

Hor. Od. l. i. 28.

He perished by shipwreck, in a voyage undertaken probably for the purpose of astronomical or geometrical discoveries. But the most celebrated philosopher of the Pythagorean sect, of whose opinions we have the best information, because from his own writings, is Ocellus Lucanus. His treatise *Peri tou pantos*, or of the Universe, has come entire down to our times, and is a valuable monument of the philosophy of the ancients. His fundamental doctrines are the eternity of the mundane system, and its absolute perfection, so as to exclude the possibility of change from the failure or corruption of any of its parts. From this ancient philosopher, Aristotle and Plato have borrowed largely in their writings *on the nature of the universe.*

The Eleatic sect of philosophy, believed to have sprung from the Pythagorean or Italic, was founded by Xenophanes, about 500 years before Christ. It was called Eleatic because it owed its fame chiefly to Parmenides, Zeno, and Leucippus, natives of Elea, a city of Æolia. The metaphysical doctrines of this sect, in so far as we can judge of them from the few fragments which have survived, and the notices of them found in the works of Aristotle, are perfectly unintelligible. They maintained that things had neither a beginning, an end, nor any change; that all the phenomena which we see of changes in the visible world are entirely in our own senses; and that of the real essence of things we have no perception, and therefore can

* "Close by the shore a span of earth contains,
Oh, mighty man of art! thy last, thy great remains;
Whose penetrating mind and skilful hands
Measured the heavens and earth, and numbered all the sands.
Vain is thy learning now; thy active soul
No more shall trace the stars, or travel to the pole."
Bentley.

attain to no knowledge: but as our senses are fallacious, and it is only through their medium that we perceive anything, so we cannot trust to them, and therefore have no assurance of the truth of anything whatever. Yet upon this basis of nothing, the Eleatics (strange to tell) raised a system of physics, of which the principal doctrines were, that the universe was a compound of the four elements; that the stars were kindled up by the motion of the clouds; that the sun was an immense body of ignited vapour; but that various suns lighted various parts of the earth; and, finally (the only rational dogma, though not derived by any logical inference from premises), that there is but one God who rules over all nature.

Of the Eleatic school were Leucippus and his disciple Democritus; though they seem to have introduced a philosophy considerably different from that of Parmenides, Xenophanes, and Zeno. Leucippus supposed all things to have originated from atoms, moving in an infinite space, and producing all sensible objects by their combinations: but it was only these combinations that we perceived; we did not perceive the atoms themselves; we therefore did not perceive the reality of things, but only their appearances; a strange and pitiful sophistry. If Democritus held these opinions, it was no wonder that he, who is said to have laughed at everything, should have laughed at the doctrines of his own sect, and at all who adopted them: but the truth is, that Democritus was of no such sportive disposition. He spent the greatest part of his life (which was extended to a hundred years) in solitary study, in observing the phenomena of nature, making experiments on minerals, and dissecting the human body—a course of life which indicates a genius superior to the folly of framing idle theories on the sole basis of conjecture.

From the same school of Elea, though sometimes accounted the father of a new sect, was Heraclitus, whose disposition, the reverse of that of Democritus,

accounted everything a matter of melancholy. He seems to have been endowed with the austere spirit of a Carthusian; for, rejecting the chief magistracy of his native city, Ephesus, on account of the incorrigible vice of its inhabitants, he betook himself to the desert, and fed upon roots and water, making the beasts his companions in preference to man. He wrote a treatise on Nature, in which he made fire the origin of all things; but this fire he conceived to be endowed with mind, and to be properly the *amina mundi*, or the Divinity. His writings were purposely obscure, whence he got the epithet of *Skotinos*, or the dark philosopher. It is said, that Euripides having sent this treatise on Nature to Socrates, the latter, with his accustomed modesty, gave it this character, that all that he could understand of it seemed good; and that what surpassed his understanding, he presumed might likewise be so.

Hitherto, the principal object of the ancient Greek philosophy seems to have been the framing of theoretical systems of the origin and fabric of the universe, and the nature of the Divinity, accounted its soul, or animating principle: sublime, no doubt, and daring speculations, but little accommodated either to the weak intellect of man, or suited to improve his moral nature and increase his happiness. We must now speak of a philosopher who took juster views both of the powers and of the wants of human nature, and who, accordingly, directed his attention to that true philosophy whose object is at once to enlighten the understanding and improve the heart. It is easily perceived, that I speak here of Socrates, he who, according to Cicero's comprehensive eulogy—"brought down philosophy from heaven to dwell upon earth, who made her even an inmate of our habitations,"* and directed her research to the real interests of man, in the pursuit of his highest attainable happiness. With

* Cic. Tusc. quæst. l. i. c. 5.

the fate of this illustrious teacher we are already acquainted.* It is necessary here only to take notice of his method of philosophizing, and of his principal doctrines. Greece was, in the days of Socrates, overrun with Sophists—pretended philosophers, whose whole science consisted in a certain futile logic; an artificial apparatus of general arguments, which they could apply to every topic, and by which they could maintain, with an appearance of plausibility, either side of any proposition. It was usual for these philosophers to get up in the public assemblies or in the theatres, and offer to argue or make an oration on any subject that should be named. The Athenians, a superficial people, fond of everything new and extraordinary, were quite captivated with this kind of jugglery.† The Sophists passed for the wisest and most eloquent of men; and the youth flocked in crowds to their schools, where the rudiments of this precious art were explained and communicated. The sober part of the Athenians judged this to be a very useless discipline; but the wiser Socrates saw the pernicious tendency of this new art of philosophizing, which made everything uncertain and problematical; and his penetrating intellect easily perceived the method by which it was to be exposed and destroyed.

As all the strength and skill of the Sophists lay in the application of general arguments to the questions which they canvassed, nothing more was necessary for their confutation than to bring them to particulars—to set out by some simple and self-evident proposition, which being granted, another followed equally undeniable, till the disputant was conducted, step by step,

* See supra, book ii. ch. 2.

† Seneca has well compared sophistical reasoning to the tricks of a juggler, though he judges too favourably in accounting it a harmless play. "Idem de istis captionibus dico: nec ignoranti nocent, nec scientem juvant."—*Sen. Epist.* 45.
"I speak also of that cavilling style of reasoning, which neither confutes the ignorant, nor improves the wise."

by his own confessions, to that side of the question on which lay the truth. No method could be devised more effectual than this for the detection of sophistry; and the Athenian logicians very soon found that their general apparatus of argument would not avail them against so subtile an antagonist. They lost all credit and reputation as philosophers; but they had influence enough to poison the minds of the people with the belief that Socrates taught impious doctrines, contrary to the religion of their country; and their malice, as we have already seen, was but too successful. Their revenge was satiated by the death of one of the best of men: a crime which drew upon Athens the reproach of all Greece, and which she vainly endeavoured to expiate by the punishment of his judges, and the honours paid to his memory.

The doctrines of Socrates, which he never committed to writing, are only to be gathered imperfectly from Plato and Xenophon. The latter is the better authority, as Plato is generally believed to have used the name of Socrates on many occasions to give weight to his own opinions. Socrates founded all his morality on the belief of a God, who delighted in virtue, and whose justice would reward the good and punish the wicked in an after state. Of consequence, he believed in the immortality of the soul. He held that there were intermediate beings between God and man, who presided over the different parts of the creation, and who were to be honoured with an inferior worship. He believed that virtuous men were particularly favoured by the Divinity, who more especially manifested his care of them by the constant presence and aid of a good genius, who directed all their actions, and guarded them by secret monitions from impending evils; but on this subject, as he declined to express himself with precision, it has been reasonably conjectured, that he alluded merely to the influence of conscience, which extends its power to the virtuous alone, and deserts the vicious, abandoning them to the just

consequences of their crimes. With regard to the pursuit of knowledge, Socrates held that all science was contemptible which did not tend to the happiness of man, by the regulation of his conduct in society; that the most beneficial wisdom is to be intimately acquainted with ourselves, to see our errors and defects, that we may be enabled to amend them. He inculcated a veneration for the religion of our country, a strict respect for its laws, and a reverence for its governors, while at the same time he held the rational opinion that the true foundation of legal government is the consent of the people, and the surest bond of the subject's allegiance, the watchful care and virtuous disposition of the sovereign.

Socrates did not affect the manners or the habits of a public teacher. He had no school; he gave no professed lectures on philosophy; he mingled with his fellow-citizens in all ranks of life, conversing with each man on the subjects best suited to his occupation and talents. The theatres, the temples, the shops of the artists, the courts of justice, the public streets, were all occasionally the scene of his moral conversations and instructive arguments. Even the house of the courtezan Aspasia was honoured with his frequent visits. He found in that accomplished woman a mind stored with various knowledge, an acute and vigorous understanding, and those engaging manners which gave her a powerful hold of the minds of the Athenian youth. She was the mistress and confidant of Pericles, who did not disdain to consult her on affairs of public concern. If we should hesitate to suppose that the philosopher thought it not unworthy of his character to improve her morals and reclaim her mind to virtue, he might reasonably seek his own improvement, and avail himself of her knowledge of the world to enlarge and extend his powers of utility.

"Tutor of Athens! he in every street
Dealt priceless treasure: goodness his delight,

Wisdom his wealth, and glory his reward.
Deep through the human heart, with playful skill,
His simple question stole; as into truth
And serious deeds he smiled the laughing race;
Taught moral happy life, whate'er can bless
Or grace mankind; and what he taught he was."
Thomson's Liberty, part ii.

With the death of Socrates, sophistry regained her empire. Even his own disciples departed from the doctrines of their master. Aristippus, the founder of the Cyrenaic sect, adopted great part of the Socratic morality, but added some peculiar opinions of his own. It was his idea that a philosopher would follow justice and the practice of virtue, from the sole consideration of his own advantage, and without regard to the interests of others. He placed the chief happiness of man in pleasure, and true philosophy was that which procured the largest portion of selfish gratification. We must presume that intellectual, not sensual, pleasure was in the philosopher's contemplation while he advanced this dogma; but even with this allowance, his object was far less worthy than that which his master proposed, general utility.

The morality of Socrates, thus modified by the Cyrenaic sect and not improved, was pushed the length of extravagance by the Cynics. The founder of this sect was Antisthenes, a pupil of Socrates, but who probably did not possess the esteem of his master. To evince his contempt of luxury, he chose to wear an old and tattered cloak. "Why so ostentatious?" said Socrates. "Through your ragged coat I see your vanity." Virtue, in the opinion of the Cynics, consisted in renouncing all the conveniences and comforts of life. They clothed themselves in rags, disdained to live in a house, slept in the streets, ate nothing but what was coarse and insipid, and wandered about the country with a stick and a knapsack. They decried all the arts as either useless or dangerous. Science was altogether fruitless and unnecessary; for a virtu-

ous man had attained to the perfection of his nature, and had no need to learn anything. From voluntary ignorance they advanced to impudence; and having nothing to lose, while they scorned all gain, they indulged themselves in satire and invective without restraint. It is, however, not improbable that this spirit of censure with which they were actuated has drawn many calumnies on their sect. The vices with which Diogenes has been reproached are hardly to be believed, when we know that some of the most virtuous of the Greeks were his admirers and disciples.

As the character of this extraordinary person was differently judged in his own time, some accounting him the wisest of men and others little better than a madman, it is no wonder that his estimation with the moderns should be equally various. It is not to be doubted that the love of singularity was a powerful motive of his conduct and opinions. He opposed the common sense of mankind, and affected a contempt even of reputation, as he found that conduct a new mode of acquiring it. But that in his character there were many features of a truly philosophic mind, we are warranted to conclude from the uncommon excellence of those opinions and sentiments of his which the ancient authors have preserved. Diogenes held that the practice of virtue was man's chief end of existence; that as the body is strengthened by active labour, the mind is invigorated and kept in health by a constant tenor of active virtue; that even the contempt of pleasure is a solid and rational pleasure; that self-applause is a sufficient reward to the wise man; while glory, honours, and wealth are only the bait of fools; that the consummation of folly is to be loud in the praise of virtue without practising it; that the gods refuse the prayers of man often from compassion.

The caustic wit of Diogenes procured him both enemies and admirers. Of this talent the ancient writers, and particularly his namesake Lærtius, have

preserved many specimens. There was a mutual hostility between him and Plato. That the latter however, entertained no mean opinion of the talents of his rival, appears from his terming him *a Socrates run mad*. Plato had defined man to be a two-legged animal without feathers. Diogenes plucked the feathers from a cock, and thrust him into the academy: "See," said he, "Plato's *man!*" The bluntness of his manners was exemplified in his celebrated answer to Alexander the Great, who, coming to visit the philosopher, and finding him seated in his tub, asked if he could do him any favour; "Yes," said the other, "stand from between me and the sun." Discoursing, one day, in a grave tone on the practice of virtue, when he observed his auditors dropping off, he began all at once to bawl out a song of ribaldry and nonsense, when immediately a great crowd gathered around him: "See," said he, "how willingly a fool is listened to, when a wise man is neglected." Hearing, on one occasion, a worthless fellow lamenting that he was dying at a distance from his native country, "Don't be uneasy, friend, about that," said he; "wherever you die, you'll find a passage to hell."

It is not a little extraordinary that a sect even of sophists should have arisen from the school of Socrates. This was the Megaric sect, of which Euclid was the founder; not Euclid the mathematician, for his science owned no affinity with sophistry. The Megaric philosophers were the happy inventors of those logical quibbles which, even in modern ages, exercised the talents of the gravest men, and which were often employed with success to propagate error and obscure the truth. The chief philosophers of this sect, besides its founder, were Eubulides, Alexinus Eleensis, characteristically named *Elenchinus* or the Wrangler, Diodorus surnamed *Cronos* or the Driveller, and Stilpo, a philosopher of real learning and ability, but who gave too much importance to subtilty of disputation—in

Brucker's phrase, *in litigioso dicendi genere potentissimus*, [*in captious disputation most powerful.*]

The most celebrated of the disciples of Socrates was Plato, a philosopher whose doctrines have had a more extensive and a more lasting empire over the minds of mankind than those perhaps of any other of the ancients. Plato, a native of Ægina, and thus by his country an Athenian, was born about 430, B. C. His lineage was most illustrious, being descended on his father's side from Codrus, and on the mother's from Solon. With every accomplishment of education suitable to his birth, and showing early indications of a genius for poetry, he attached himself at the age of twenty to the school of Socrates, and soon became the greatest adept in the philosophy of his master, whose discourses he committed to writing in the same colloquial form in which they were delivered. The Dialogues of Plato are therefore the most ample documents of the Socratic philosophy, though not the most correct and pure; for it was Plato's practice to blend his own opinions with those of Socrates, and this without any note of distinction. He learned the dialect art from Euclid the Megaric; he studied the Pythagorean system under Philolaus and Archytas; and his travels into Egypt accomplished him in all the wisdom of that country, and particularly in the science of geometry. Returning to Athens, he established his school in the grove called the Academy, over the gate of which, to show the importance he annexed to mathematical studies, he placed this inscription Οὐδεὶς ἀγεωμέτρητος εἰσιτω, "Let none enter here who is ignorant of geometry."

The reputation of Plato procured him numberless hearers and admirers. Among these were some of the most eminent men of Greece. It is enough to say that Demosthenes, Isocrates, and Aristotle, were his disciples. The philosophy of Plato embraced three distinct branches of science: theology, under which are comprehended his metaphysical opinions:

physics; and politics. In the first department, it was Plato's fundamental doctrine *that from nothing nothing can proceed.* Believing, therefore, in the eternal existence of the Deity, he believed likewise in the eternity of *matter*, as the substratum or *ule* of the Deity's operations. This *matter*, however, was in a chaotic state, and endowed with no qualities whatever, till the Eternal mind conferred these qualities upon it, reduced it into order, and thus formed the beautiful fabric of the universe, of which *the idea* or archetype had existed from all eternity in himself. But in chaotic matter Plato conceived that, as there was an original deformity, so there was a natural resistance to that perfect order and excellence which the Deity sought to produce, but which he could not entirely overcome; and hence the origin of that evil which partially contaminates his works: yet here the philosopher seems himself to perceive the objection from the boundless power of the Divinity, as he expresses himself with great obscurity on the subject. His notions of God, however, are not only most sublime, but extremely refined. He conceived that the Divine nature consisted of three distinct essences, states, or hypostases: the first a pure and self-existent Essence, whose sole attribute was goodness, hence indiscriminately termed by Plato *to on* (the self-existing) and *to agathon* (the good); the second he conceived to be Mind, the wisdom or reason of the first, and the proper Creator of the universe, and therefore by Plato termed sometimes *Nous* (the intelligence), *Logos* (the word), and sometimes *Demiourgos* (the Creator); the third he conceived to be the Soul of the world; as he conceived the activity of created matter to infer an inhabiting mind, and this he termed either simply the *suché* (the soul), or *suché tou kosmou* (soul of the world.) The second *hypostasis* he supposed to be an emanation from the first, and the third from both. Such is the Platonic Trinity, bearing, in its general description, a strong resemblance to the Christian;

but differing in this material point, that in the former, the second and third persons are subordinate and inferior to the first. Yet the learned Cudworth and other ingenious men have strenuously laboured to prove the perfect conformity of the two doctrines.

But in the metaphysics of Plato there is yet another principle, which it is more difficult to comprehend. This is his doctrine of *ideas*, which, in some parts of his writings, he seems to consider as eternal existences separate from the Divinity, and in others, to regard only as certain forms or notions eternally existing in the Divine mind. The former, Plutarch* seems to think, was Plato's meaning. But be this as it may, he regarded those ideas as something eternal and immutable, and therefore held that they were the only true and proper objects of science. It was according to these eternally-existing ideas that God himself had formed the universe, which he endowed with a living soul, whence proceed both its periodical revolutions and its active and productive energy. But the universe, being thus animated by a soul which proceeds from God, is hence to be considered as containing a part of the Divinity. The planets are in like manner animated by a part of the Divine nature. Man, endowed with a rational soul, contains within himself a part of God. That part—his intellectual spirit—therefore, existed from all eternity, and is in its nature incapable of extinction. Inhabiting a body of corrupt and rebel matter, it is subject to vice and misery; but by a noble warfare against the corruption of its earthly vehicle, by subduing its unruly passions, and exercising itself in the practice of virtue and divine contemplation, it best fits itself for returning to its original state, a co-existence with the Divinity.

What is properly termed the physics of Plato, is so chimerical, to say no worse, that it scarcely merits

* See his Platonic Questions and Commentary on the *Timæus* of Plato.

attention. Fire and earth he supposed were the component parts of the visible world, and these were united by air and water. The particles of earth are cubes, those of fire are pyramidial, those of air are *octohedrons*, and those of water *eicosihedrons*. They are combined according to geometrical laws, and the *anima mundi* gives motion and regularity to the whole.

In politics Plato was equally a visionary speculatist as in physics. In his *Republic* and *Dialogue on Laws*, his notions betray an ignorance of human nature, with much enthusiasm of mind, and a large fund of benevolence. He wished to make all men philosophers, and to extinguish every vicious propensity by an absolute control of the passions; and his Republic might subsist were such a scheme practicable.

Two circumstances seem chiefly to have contributed to the great popularity and duration of the Platonic philosophy: the one, the eloquence with which its doctrines were propounded; the other, the pleasing effect of the notion which, by approaching man to the Deity, and making him even a part of the Divine nature, flattered his pride, and increased his self-importance.

The school of Plato, or the philosophy of the Ancient Academy, had in itself many divisions, whose particular distinguishing tenets it would be both tedious and fruitless to enumerate. But the Platonic philosophy found its chief opponents in four remarkable sects—those of Aristotle, of Pyrrho, of Zeno, and Epicurus; in other words, the Peripatetic, the Skeptic, the Stoic, and the Epicurean.

Aristotle was born at Stagyra, a Thracian city, then under the dominion of Macedonia. His father was physician to Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. After a youth of dissipation, he betook himself with indefatigable ardour to the study of philosophy, and was for twenty years a favourite disciple of Plato. His high reputation for universal learning procured him from Philip the important charge of the educa-

tion of the young Alexander—a trust which he fulfilled with zeal and ability. After his pupil had arrived at manhood, and had begun the career of his impetuous life, the philosopher repaired to Athens, where he established a school of philosophy in the Lyceum. It was his custom to discourse to his disciples in walking, and hence his philosophy was termed *peripatetic*. Endowed with great original genius, he disdained an implicit adherence to the doctrines of Plato, or those of any other philosopher. He not only dared to think and reason for himself on almost every branch of human knowledge, but, nobly confident of his own powers, to prescribe the laws of reasoning to others, and even to reduce to system the combined result of all that was known in his age, both in the science of matter and of mind. A great body of his writings is yet preserved,* and is sufficient to warrant our estimation of Aristotle as one of the most vigorous and comprehensive geniuses that ever the world has produced.

The logics of Aristotle are contained in the books

* Very few of the writings of Aristotle were published during his lifetime. Among these few were probably his Poetics and his Art of Rhetoric, as both these treatises were composed for the use of his pupil Alexander, and might probably pass into many hands during the life of their author. The rest of his works he bequeathed to Theophrastus, who left them to Neleus Scepsius; the latter sold a part of them to Ptolemy Philadelphus, and these perished in the burning of the Alexandrian library. The rest were buried, as is said, for the sake of preservation, in some subterraneous vault, where they lay forgotten for 130 years, and at their recovery were found in a very defective state from corruption. In that state they fell into the hands of Apellicon of Teos, who supplied the deficiencies from his own invention, and not always with great felicity. They came, finally, into the possession of Tyrannion, the grammarian, who used the same freedom to a yet greater degree. Hence we must make much allowance for the imperfection, obscurity, and perhaps contradiction which may be found in the writings of Aristotle, as they now appear.

of his *Organon*. A predominant passion of this philosopher, observable in most of his writings, and more particularly in his logics, is the classifying and arranging the objects of knowledge. Thus the Organon sets out with a division of all things of a simple or uncompounded nature, into ten categories. Those are *substance*, *quantity*, *quality*, *relation*, *place*, *time*, *situation*, *having*, *doing*, *suffering*. Each of these is discussed at large in a separate chapter. We have next the division and arrangement of propositions into five prædicables or universals, viz., *genus*, *species*, *difference*, *property*, and *accident*. One or other of these may be predicated or affirmed of all propositions. The purpose of the division into *categories*, is to arrange all the simple and uncompounded objects of human knowledge under certain general classes; and by subdividing these, as private soldiers make part of a company, and so many companies make a regiment, we can, in like manner, muster all the notions that enter the human mind, in rank and file, as a well-ordered and regular army. By the division into *prædicables*, we are taught all the relations which the subject can have to the predicate, or the thing affirmed of the subject. That divisions of this kind may have a beneficial effect in producing an accuracy in thinking and reasoning, it would be vain to deny; though it may be alike vain to annex to them such a degree of importance as they seem to have held with Aristotle and his followers.

But the chief part of the Organon of Aristotle is his theory of syllogisms contained in those books called the *Analytics*, because the intention of them is to resolve all reasoning into simple ingredients. It is well known what importance was for many ages annexed to syllogistic reasoning, in regarding it, not only as a test of truth, but as an instrument for the advancement of science. It is now, perhaps more than it ought to be, undervalued. It may be safely affirmed, that there is no false proposition which can

stand the test of fair syllogistic argument, and, therefore, the utility of this criterion for the detection of sophistical reasoning cannot be denied. But it is equally an error to suppose, that syllogistic argument is capable of leading to discoveries in any of the sciences. If our forefathers, therefore, by trusting to it as a guide in the latter department, attributed more to this mode of reasoning than it was capable of performing, we of the present day, by denying its use in the former, and altogether exploding its employment, seem to have run to an extreme as blameable. This error has arisen from a misapprehension of the sentiments of Lord Bacon, who is generally supposed to have condemned the syllogistic mode of reasoning as altogether useless. But this is a mistake. That great philosopher justly exploded the application of logical reasoning to the science of physics, by clearly showing that such a process could never lead to discoveries in that science, which were the fruit alone of induction from experiment, and the observation of facts. But he was far from denying the utility of logical reasoning in its proper sphere. He remarks, that it is the province of logic to lead not to the invention of arts, but of arguments, and, therefore, that in the popular sciences of morality, law, divinity, and the like, it has its proper and useful application.*

A large portion of the works of Aristotle is occupied by his physical writings. In these he treats separately of the nature of the world, of the heavens, of meteors, of the human soul, of the length and shortness of life, of youth, old age, and death. He has likewise given an ample *history of animals* in ten books—a portion only of a work which extended to forty books. The regard which Alexander entertained for his preceptor as well as for the interests of science, was

* See Bacon's works, vol. i. p. 63, folio edition. The utility of logical reasoning is most ably shown by Dr. Reid, in the concluding part of his Analysis of Aristotle's Logic, in *Sketches of the History of Man*, book iii.

manifested in his collecting, at a prodigious expense, during his Asiatic expedition, all the rare productions of nature, and particularly an astonishing variety of animals, which he sent home to Greece for the use of Aristotle in the composition of his natural history. The descriptions, therefore, of natural objects, and of the structure and habits of animals, contained in this work are extremely valuable, as being the result of actual examination and study. In the description of the heavenly bodies and their motions, and generally in mathematical science, Aristotle has shown less knowledge than his predecessors, Pythagoras and Plato.

The vanity of Aristotle prompted him to aim at universal knowledge; and professing to embrace the whole circle of the sciences, he only manifests the more signally his superficial knowledge in many departments, and his presumptuous rashness in deciding questions beyond the reach of human intellect. These palpable defects have injured his legitimate reputation in those branches of science in which he is truly excellent. It is in his critical and moral writings that the talents of Aristotle are more usefully displayed than in any others of his works. I allude here to the fragment, which alone we possess, of his *Poetics*, and to his *Art of Rhetoric*—more particularly the latter.

The Poetics of Aristotle have commonly been considered as a brief digest of the laws of criticism in poetry; but it is that species of criticism which assigns no other foundation for its judgments than authority, or the practice of the best writers. Aristotle in this fragment has not ascended to the source of criticism, which is to be found in the structure of the mind and nature of the passions. He describes with great precision the three different species of poetical comedy, tragedy, and epic* composition. He details

* On the subject of comedy, Aristotle has been extremely brief in his instructions. He has remarked, in general, that

the requisite ingredients of each species with respect to subject, as they are classed under the divisions of fable, sentiments, and manners; and he briefly lays down the rules for the structure and style of each species. But this code of laws rests upon the sole authority of the legislator, and not upon any solid basis of nature, or consonance to the universal feelings of mankind. The only reason given by Aristotle for their observance is, that Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and the best of the Greek poets, have observed them. This, no doubt, is a presumption of their rationality; and, at any rate, it is useful instruction in any art to know what has been the general practice of the best artists.

But the *Treatise on Rhetoric* is not a fragment, and must be more seriously considered. In that treatise the author has given an elaborate analysis of the passions, and of the sources of pain and pleasure, happiness and unhappiness; as such an analysis affords the best instruction in the means of swaying the passions and persuading the judgment to the purposes of the orator, which it is the province of this science to teach. Here Aristotle has shown the most profound knowledge of human nature, and a genius truly philosophical, in investigating the most delicate modifications of the affections, and the power they have of balancing each other's influence; as he has strikingly evinced his own peculiar talent of generalization and scientific arrangement.

The style of Aristotle is a great contrast to that of Plato: the latter is eloquent, diffuse, and figurative; the former, dry, sententious, and so compressed, that

similar rules apply to a comic as to a serious subject, meaning that what he has said regarding the unities of time, place, and subject, and likewise the congruity of the sentiments and manners, have the same application in the one species of the drama as in the other. The poetics of Aristotle, are evidently an imperfected work, of which a considerable part has perished.

it requires often the most painful attention to follow his chain of reasoning, and in many instances even to discover his true meaning. This is particularly the case in his metaphysical writings. The obscurity prevalent in these parts of his works was remarked by ancient writers, and has given rise to numberless commentaries and explanations, totally different from each other. It has been supposed that on some difficult points of discussion, the philosopher studied to express himself with obscurity: and hence Diogenes Laertius has compared himself to the cuttle-fish, which darkens the water around it to escape from danger. But Aristotle, wherever he is intelligible, discovers ample proof of a great, original, and comprehensive genius.

While Aristotle was employed in rearing the structure of the peripatetic philosophy, Pyrrho, his contemporary, was busy in combating the opinions of all the different sects of philosophers.* It was his notion that the only true wisdom consisted in doubting of everything. Endowed with penetration enough to discover the insufficiency of many of the prevailing systems, and clearly perceiving the inadequacy of the human understanding to resolve the most important questions both in the sciences of matter and of mind, it was his desire to expose the futility of all the laborious exertions of his predecessors in the search of truth, and to find a philosophic tranquillity of spirit in the belief that all was doubt and uncertainty.

The Pyrrhonists, or skeptics, therefore, formed no systems: they amused themselves in attacking the weak parts of other schemes of philosophy, and they had nothing to defend of their own. They found great advantage in the sophistical mode of reasoning, which they could fairly employ against those who used it,

* Pyrrho was a native of Elea, and born in the fourth century before Christ; he was a disciple of Anaxarchus, and accompanied that philosopher to India, in the expedition of Alexander the Great.

and which they could successfully expose when used against themselves. It was not unnatural that the skeptics should conclude from the irreconcileable differences of opinion that prevailed among various sects of philosophers, that among so many opposite systems the greater part had taught error instead of truth; but it was a rash conclusion thence to infer that truth had no existence, or that certainty on any subject of philosophical speculation was altogether unattainable. The skeptic, or Pyrrhonist, involuntarily refuted his own opinions by his practice; for though he held, in theory, that there was no reality in moral distinctions, and that truth and falsehood, virtue and vice, beauty and deformity, had no real or essential difference, his actions and conduct in life were like those of other men, perpetually influenced and regulated by the belief of those essential differences. Thus the ridicule which he affected to throw upon other systems could be retorted with greater force upon his own; for that man is evidently less chargeable with absurdity who pursues a line of conduct which he believes to be right, than he who follows a line of conduct in absolute doubt whether it be right or wrong.

As the attainment of a perfect tranquillity of mind was the professed object of the Pyrrhonists, the opposite and rival sects of the Stoics and Epicureans proposed the same end in their systems of philosophy. We have seen the course pursued by the skeptics, a very improper one to attain its end, since it is obvious that there can be no mental tranquillity where the reason and the feelings are in constant opposition. The Stoics cherished, if not a more certain, yet a far more consistent, and doubtless a more dignified system of sentiments and conduct. They strove to attain philosophic tranquillity by an absolute command and sovereignty over the passions, and a perfect indifference to all the accidents and calamities of life. The founder of this sect, which is among the most distinguished schools of philosophy, was Zeno the younger, a native

of Cyprus, who flourished in the third century before Christ. He was a disciple of Crates, the Cynic; and on that system of philosophy he founded his own, which may be considered as an offspring of the Cynical school. The Stoical doctrines have had a very extensive prevalence and duration; and though in some particulars palpably erroneous, may be accounted, on the whole, more consonant to right reason, and more favourable to the practice of virtue, than those of any other sect of the philosophy of the ancients.

According to the Stoics, the whole universe, and God himself, the creator and soul of that universe, are regulated by certain laws, which are immutable and resulting from necessity. The actions of God himself are regulated by those general laws; yet in one sense they may be considered as free and voluntary: viz., that as there is nothing external of the universe which God pervades, and which his soul regulates, there is nothing external of himself which can impel or necessitate him. Man, according to the notions of the Stoics, is a part of the divinity. The human soul is a portion of that great soul which pervades the universe. The will of man is subject, like the Divine will, to unalterable laws; yet it is virtually free, because man believes himself a free agent, and his conduct is influenced by that belief. He obeys voluntarily and from inclination that destiny which he must have obeyed *ab ante*, (from necessity) though he had not inclined it. Man being a part of the universe which is regulated by God, cannot complain that he is bound by the same laws which regulate and bind universal nature, and even God himself. The wise man, therefore, never considers what is good or evil with respect to himself. Whatever happened to him must necessarily have happened according to the order of nature; because had it not been necessary, it would not have happened. The pains and pleasures of an individual are, therefore, unworthy of the regard of him who attends to the universal good: his pains and pleasures

are determined by the same law which determined his existence. He cannot repine that he exists, for at whom shall he repine? He existed by the necessity of nature. Virtue, in the opinion of a Stoic, was nothing more than a manly resolution to accommodate the unalterable laws of nature. Vice was a weak and dastardly endeavour to oppose those laws. Vice therefore was folly, and virtue the only true wisdom.

But the virtue of the Stoics was not a principle of tranquil and passive acquiescence; it was a state of continual, active, and vigorous exertion. It was the duty of a man to exercise the faculties of his mind in acquainting himself with the nature, the causes, and the relations of every part of that universe which he sees around him, that he may truly understand his own place in it, and the duties which he is destined and called on to fulfil. It is incumbent on man likewise to exercise his faculties in the discerning and distinguishing those things over which he has the power and control, and those which are beyond his power, and therefore ought not to be the objects of his care or his attention. All things whatever, according to the Stoics, fall under one or the other of these descriptions. To the class of things within our power belong our opinions, our desires, affections, endeavours, aversions, and, in a word, whatever may be termed our own works. To this class of things beyond our power belong the body of man, his goods or possessions, honours, dignities, offices, and generally what cannot be termed his own works. The former class of things are free, voluntary, and altogether at our command. The latter are in all respects the contrary; we cannot call them our own, nor in any shape control them. To the former, therefore, alone the wise man directs his care, and by a due attention to them his happiness is in his own power. The latter he despises, as incapable of affecting his real welfare, and in no degree obedient to his will.

As the Stoics believed the universe to be the work

of an all-powerful, all-wise, and supremely beneficent Being, whose providence continually regulates the whole of that system of which every part is so combined as to produce the greatest possible sum of general good; so they regarded man as a principal instrument in the hand of God to accomplish that great purpose. The Creator, therefore, with transcendent wisdom, had so framed the moral constitution of man, that he finds his own chief happiness in promoting the welfare and happiness of his fellow-creatures. "In the free consent of man to fulfil this end of his being, by accommodating his mind to the Divine will, and thus endeavouring to discharge his part in society with cheerful zeal, with perfect integrity, with manly resolution, and with an entire resignation to the decrees of Providence, lies the sum and essence of his duty."

Very different from this was the philosophy of Epicurus, which, however, proposed to itself the same end—the attainment of a perfect tranquillity of mind. The term by which he marked the object of his philosophy, contributed much to increase the number of his disciples. "The supreme happiness of man," said Epicurus, "consists in *pleasure*. To this centre tend all his desires; and this, however disguised, is the real object of all his actions. The purpose of philosophy is to teach whatever best conduces to the health of the body and of the mind; for where either is unsound or diseased, he can enjoy no true happiness or pleasure. As the health of the body is best secured by temperance, and the refraining from all hurtful gratifications of the senses, so the health of the mind is best promoted by the practice of virtue, and the exercise of the benevolent and social affections." Thus, the term pleasure, as explained by Epicurus, involves nothing unworthy of the pursuit of the good and virtuous. Epicurus himself is said to have been a man of worth and probity, and it is a certain fact that some of the most virtuous of the ancients were the professed disciples of his system. But that the principle of his

philosophy is unsound, needs no other proof than this; that if *pleasure* is admitted to be man's chief object of pursuit, every man must be allowed to be the best judge of what constitutes his *pleasure*, and will determine, according to his own feelings, from what sources it is to be drawn. The practice of temperance might have been the pleasure of Epicurus; and we are told that it was so, and that his favourite diet, and what he usually presented to his guests, was bread and water. But it is the chief pleasure of others to be intemperate and voluptuous. It might have been the chief pleasure of Epicurus to be honest and just in his dealings, but others find pleasure in fraud and chicane. In short, there is no vice or crime that might not find an apology, or rather a recommendation. Had it not afforded pleasure it would not have been practised or committed. "If it is allowable for me," we shall suppose the disciple of Epicurus to say to his master—"if it is allowable for me to pursue pleasure as my chief object, it is, of consequence, allowable for me to be vicious, if I find pleasure in it."—"But you are punished," says Epicurus, "in the consequence; and you will find vice productive of pain instead of pleasure."—"Of that," says the disciple, "I take my risk; I look to the consequence, and I find it overbalanced by my present gratification: I find pleasure in this action, notwithstanding the hazard of its consequence: it is therefore allowable for me to commit it." Epicurus must grant that the conclusion is fair and legitimate.

Equally erroneous with this system of morality was Epicurus's system of nature. An infinite number of atoms existing from all eternity in an infinite space, and continually in motion, were the elements of that matter of which the universe is composed; but this universe, thus composed of atomical or indivisible parts, has subsisted in its present form from all eternity; and ever will subsist. It is, therefore, of necessary existence, and we have no need to resort to the power of a

Creator to account for its origin. or to the wisdom of a Deity for its maintenance and government. But though the notion of a Deity did not enter into the system of Epicurus, to any active effect, he did not deny that the gods might exist. He professed even to teach that an order of eternal essences, clothed with a species of body, and endowed with senses for the perception of pleasure, resided in some superior region of the universe, where they enjoyed a serene and infinitely happy existence, unalloyed by any knowledge or perception of the affairs of this material world, and undisturbed by any care or concern for its inhabitants. A religious creed, which, as Cicero well observes, is but a mask for absolute atheism, and which its author could have no other reason for propounding, than the servile fear of incurring danger from the open avowal of impiety.*

From the foregoing brief account of the different sects or schools of philosophy in Greece, I shall draw only two reflections: The one is, that with a very few exceptions, and more particularly that of the sect last mentioned, amid all the errors incident to the mind unenlightened by revealed religion, the reason of mankind has, in all ages, looked up to a supreme, intelligent and omnipotent Being—the Author of our existence—the Creator and the Governor of the universe: a belief which forces itself upon the most uncultivated understanding, and which the advancement of the intellectual powers tends always to strengthen and confirm. The other reflection is, that, from the great variety and opposition of those systems which we have enumerated of the Greek philosophers we may perceive among that people a liberal spirit of toleration in matters of opinion, which stopped short at absolute irreligion and impiety; and a freedom of judgment, in all matters of philosophical speculation, which did honour to their national character, and the genius of

* Cic. *de Nat. Deor.* lib. i. in fine.

their legislative systems. If the Greek philosophers did not attain to truth, or to the perfection of science, they had, at least, the road open before them; and their errors may afford useful instruction to the moderns, by ascertaining the limits of the mental powers on matters of abstract speculation, by dispelling prejudices, simplifying the objects of investigation and discovery, and bringing the rational and candid inquirer nearer to the ends of his pursuit.

BOOK THE THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

THE ROMAN HISTORY—Earliest Periods of the History of Rome—Etruscans—Foundation of Rome—Disputed Accounts of—Romulus—Rape of the Sabines—Origin of the Political Institutions of the Romans—Union with the Sabines—Numa—His Institutions—Tullus Hostilius—Ancus Martius—Tarquinius Priscus.

OF the precise era when the country of Italy was peopled, we have no certain accounts, nor anything beyond probable conjecture. There seem, however, good grounds to believe that this peninsula, enjoying great advantages of situation, soil, and climate, was very early a populous country, and inhabited in one quarter even by a refined and polished nation, many ages before the Roman name was known. This people was known by the appellation of Etrurians or Etruscans, though their more ancient designation is said to have been Tyrrheni, from the name of a Lydian prince who brought with him a colony of his countrymen from the lesser Asia, and planted that part of Italy afterward called Etruria. Of the early history of this people there remain but a few detached and obscure traces to be found in the ancient authors; but there is reason to believe that, like all other colonies, their progress to civilization was much more rapid than that of an aboriginal people, and that the Etruscans were in a very advanced state of improvement in manners and the arts while the surrounding nations or tribes in the centre of Italy were yet extremely barbarous. The Roman historians acknowledge this fact.

Livy speaks of the Etruscans as a great and opulent people in Italy, powerful both at land and sea, before the origin of the Roman state. Dyonysius of Halicarnassus deduces most of the religious institutions of the Romans from Etruria. Augury and divination, which were essential ingredients in most of their ceremonies and mysteries, were certainly derived from that country, as probably were the first dawnings of Roman science and literature. The religion of the Etruscans was polytheism, and many of their deities were common to them with the Greeks, as those of the latter with the divinities of the Phœnicians and other Asiatic nations. The Roman theogony can easily be traced to those origins. The Cabirian mysteries of the Romans, the Mithriac and Acherontic ceremonies, were all immediately derived from Etruria. The Etruscan alphabet, nearly that of the Phœnicians, was likewise used by the Romans in the early ages of their state. The gradual change from this ancient alphabet to the characters used by the Romans in the latter periods, may be distinctly traced by the series of *inscriptions* yet remaining.

The ancient Etrurians are celebrated for their knowledge of astronomy, which countenances the notion of their Asiatic origin. They had successfully cultivated poetry and music. Scenical representations were in great repute among them; and the first comedians who appeared at Rome were brought from that country, on occasion of a pestilence, either from a superstitious idea of appeasing the wrath of the gods, or the humbler, though not less rational motive of supporting the spirits of the people under the general calamity.

It is probable the Etruscans had made great progress in the fine arts of sculpture and painting, and the practice of these arts presupposes a very high state of civilization. The elegance of the Etruscan vases, and the beautiful painting which decorates them, are subjects of just admiration and of zealous imitation by

the moderns. Of this art, the fabric of pottery, the ancient authors agree in attributing the invention to this people,* and none other appears ever to have carried it to so high a pitch of perfection. Architecture, engraving of precious stones, sculpture, and painting, were of high antiquity among the Etruscans at the time when the Greeks were comparatively in a state of barbarism. The Etruscans were a declining people at the time of the foundation of Rome, though possessing many relics of their ancient grandeur, both in their knowledge of the arts and in their manners. The Romans were mere barbarians; but they had the good sense to copy after and adopt many improvements from their polished neighbours.

The country of Etruria, as we learn from Dionysius, was divided into twelve districts, each of which was ruled by a separate chief, called in the Etruscan language *Lucumo*. Of these lucumones we find frequent mention in Livy. Each had a sovereign jurisdiction in his province; but the whole were united in a confederacy, and held a general diet or council on all occasions in which the common interest was concerned. To give greater efficacy to this union, it appears that, at least in time of war, the whole nation obeyed a common chief, who was elected probably by the whole of the lucumos. Livy informs us that no single state could engage in war or conclude peace without the consent of the whole Etruscan body. The principal towns of Etruria were Volscinii, Clusium, Cortona, Perusia, Falerii, Tarquinii, and Veii. These, with several others mentioned by Dionysius, were populous and flourishing states before the common era of the foundation of Rome.†

* Tatianus, in his oration to the Greeks, in which he reproaches them with their vanity in attributing to themselves the invention of all arts, affirms positively that the Etruscans taught them the art of pottery; Clemens Alexandrinus makes the same assertion.

† The Etruscans were, like their Phœnician ancestors, a

This polished people, inhabiting the centre of Italy, was surrounded by a great number of petty nations, who seem to have been in a state little removed from barbarism. The Umprians, the Ligurians, the Sabines, the Picentes, the Latins, appear at the time of the supposed foundation of the Roman state to have been a set of independent tribes, who were engaged in constant hostilities with each other. The territory called *Latium* extended in length about fifty miles, and in breadth about sixteen. It contained no less than forty-seven independent communities. The other adjacent provinces were divided in the same manner—a state of society in which constant warfare is unavoidable; a warfare, however, of which conquest or extension of power is not the object, but which arises merely from the spirit of plunder and depredation. Their enterprises, therefore, were limited to ravaging the fields, carrying off the flocks and herds, destroying the harvest of their neighbours, or such like rude and barbarous achievements. The desire of conquest has no place in such a state of society; for a victory can never be pursued or the conquered territory preserved: as the whole community is obliged to be active for its subsistence, and agriculture is of course suspended

maritime and mercantile people. Hence the fable invented by the Greeks, and sung by Ovid, that the Tyrrhenians were turned into dolphins. They colonized all along the coast of Italy, and built many large towns, during the splendid period of their history. But this was of short continuance. A dreadful pestilence and famine, as Dionysius informs us, (lib. i. c. 15, 16,) desolated their country about the period of the Trojan war. These calamities were recorded in a poem found on certain tablets of brass, called the Eugubine Tables, which were discovered, A. D. 1444, in a subterraneous vault near the ancient theatre of Iguvium or Eugubium, now Gubbio, a city of Umbria. The poem is written in Pelasgian characters. This lamentation, with an interpretation by M. Gori, may be found in "Sir William Hamilton's Etruscan Antiquities;" and it is inferred from various circumstances to be two hundred and forty-seven years more ancient than the works of Hesiod.

while the nation is at war, the soldier must quit his arms for the plough and spade, for a lengthened campaign would produce a famine. It is only where acquired wealth and increased population can afford regular armies of professional soldiers, that conquests can be prosecuted and maintained. The Etruscans seem to have enjoyed these advantages over all the barbarous nations around them, and consequently they were in a capacity to have subdued the whole of them; but their genius was not warlike: they were fond of and cultivated the arts of peace; and though occasionally engaged in hostilities with the Romans, they appear never to have armed but when attacked.

The gradual increase of population among a warlike tribe may enable them to preserve their conquests, either by garrisoning, or by transplanting a part of the conquered inhabitants into the capital, and replacing them by a colony of citizens. This we shall see was afterward the policy of the Romans, and thus by degrees they extended their territory and increased their power. But sometimes a flourishing people is compelled to colonize, from an overgrowth of its population. Dionysius of Halicarnassus informs us of the manner in which a state, when it became overstocked, transplanted its colonies. They consecrated to a particular god all the youth of a certain age, furnished them with arms, and after the performance of a solemn sacrifice, dismissed them to conquer for themselves a new country. These enterprises were, no doubt, often unsuccessful; but when they succeeded, and an establishment was obtained, it does not appear that the mother state pretended to have any rights over them, or claims upon the country where they settled.

The origin of the Roman state is involved in great obscurity, and various accounts are given of the foundation of that illustrious city, which differ not only as to the time of its structure, but in all circumstances concerning it. To reconcile in some degree these dis-

crepances, it is the notion of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, that there were at different periods several cities which bore the name of Rome; that the Rome founded some time after the Trojan war, was destroycd, and another built in the first year of the seventh Olympiad, that is, 752 B. C.; nay, he pretends to find evidence even of a more ancient Rome than either of these, but in what situation or period of time he does not determine. Whoever wishes to see all the different accounts of this matter, and to be convinced how little certainty there is in any one of them, may consult the learned dissertations of M. Pouilly and of the Abbe Sallier, in the sixth volume of the *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions.* The vulgar and generally received account of the foundation of Rome by Romulus is not upon the whole entitled to any degree of credit superior to the rest, but as it was commonly adopted by the Romans themselves, and has passed current down to modern times, it is proper to be acquainted with it, whatever doubt we may entertain of its authenticity.

Rome, according to the chronology of Archbishop Usher, was founded 752 years before the Christian era. Romulus, at the head of a troop of shepherds, his followers, is said to have built a few huts upon the Palatine Hill, in a part of the territory of Alba; but as it is not very probable that shepherds should assemble to the number of three thousand, it is natural to suppose them to have been banditti or freebooters, accustomed to wander and to ravage; and the increase of their numbers, while it furnished the means, probably suggested the idea, of occupying and fortifying an enclosed territory for themselves. To strengthen the new community, and to fill the space which they had marked out for their city, their chief proclaimed an asylum for all such fugitives and deserters from the neighbouring states as chose to put themselves under his protection, and acknowledge his authority.

Hitherto, this new association consisted solely of

men: it was necessary they should provide themselves with women. The story of the rape of the Sabines has much the air of romance; though it derives a degree of credit from the festival of the *Consulia*, instituted in honour of the *God Consus*, the protector of plots; a solemnity which was always believed at Rome to have commemorated that exploit. Romulus proclaimed a great festival and games in honour of Neptune, to which he invited all the neighbouring states. The Sabines,* Cecinians, Crustuminians, and Antemnates, came thither in great troops. The plan was concerted, and at a certain signal, a chosen band rushed in and carried off a great number of the women. The Sabines, and the nations in their alliance, prepared immediately to avenge this outrage; and the infant commonwealth of Rome was, almost at the moment of its formation, at war with all its neighbours.

The Roman historians, to flatter the vanity of their countrymen, have been extremely lavish of encomium on the high character of Romulus, whom they paint with all the qualities of a consummate politician and legislator. But if even the Greeks, at this time with far greater advantages, were extremely rude and uncivilized, what ideas can we form of the people of Latium, and their knowledge of the arts of government and legislation? There is certainly very little probability that a troop of banditti should all at once assume the form of a regular political structure, or that a great legislator should appear in the person of a freebooter, or of a shepherd, at the age of eighteen. The sounder opinion certainly seems to be, that those

* The Sabines were an ancient people of Italy, situated between Etruria and Latium. Their capital was *Cures*, in the territory now called Corezze. The inhabitants of *Cecina*, *Crustuminium*, and *Antemnæ*, were probably either subjects or allies of the Sabine state. From Cures, the capital city of the Sabines, the Romans, after their union with that people, took the appellation of *Curites* or *Quirites*.

wise and politic laws and institutions commonly ascribed to Romulus arose gradually from ancient usages and a state of manners prevalent in Italy before the foundation of Rome.

If, however, we can suppose Romulus to have been in fact the founder of this new kingdom, its constitution would certainly prove that he had wise and politic views. He knew, in the first place, the character and temperament of the people he governed, and was well aware that their rude and ferocious spirit would not brook the unlimited authority of a despot. It was therefore a judicious plan to admit the people to a share in the government.

He divided the mass of population into *three tribes*, and each tribe into *ten curiæ*. Of the lands belonging to the state, he formed three great portions: one appropriated to the support of religion, which is an essential instrument of good government; another destined for the public service of the state; and the third he distributed equally among the thirty curiæ, so that each Roman citizen should have two acres of land. He formed a *senate* or council, composed of a hundred of the elders, to whom he gave power to see the laws enforced, to consult concerning all affairs of state, and to report their opinion to the people in the *comitia* or assemblies, who were invested with the right of final determination in all matters of public importance.

From these first senators (*centum patres*—hundred fathers) chosen by Romulus were descended those families at Rome termed *patrician;* so that in a very little time a great distinction of rank arose from birth among the Romans.

It has indeed been supposed by Dionysius, that the distinction of patricians and plebeians was anterior to the formation of the senate, and that the one title was given to the richer, and the other to the poorer class of citizens. But whence can we suppose this inequality of wealth to have arisen, when the same author

admits that there was an equal distribution among the whole citizens of those lands, in which alone their wealth could consist?

Although Romulus gave great weight to the scale of the people in the framing of this new government, yet he reserved to himself as head of the community, very ample powers. The deliberations and decrees of the senate guided the resolutions of the people and the king had the power of naming all the senators. He had likewise the privilege of assembling the people, and a right of appeal lay to him in all questions of importance. He had the command of the army, which at first comprehended the whole body of the people. He was the chief priest, too, or *pontifex maximus*, and regulated everything that concerned or was even remotely connected with religion; and, with a very wise policy, he took care that all that regarded the rule and economy of the state was so connected.

Romulus chose for the guard of his person twelve lictors, to whom he afterward joined a troop of three hundred horsemen, named *celeres* [swift.] This was the origin of the *equites*, or Roman knights, who became the second rank in the state after the patricians. From the three tribes into which he divided the people, Romulus selected from each tribe a hundred of the handsomest of the youth, of whom he formed three companies of cavalry. This body of *equites* was augmented by Tarquinius Priscus to eighteen hundred; and in that distribution of the citizens which we shall afterward see was made by Servius Tullius, these eighteen centuries were placed in the first class. These *equites* were at first chosen by the kings alone, as being the royal life-guards; and at the end of the regal government, being now a rank in the state, the consuls, who succeeded to almost the whole of the regal power filled up the order of *equites* as they did that of the senate. In succeeding times, when the consuls became too much engrossed in military concerns, the

function of supplying both those orders devolved on the censors, of whose office I shall speak more particularly when arrived at that period when those magistrates were first instituted. The marks of distinction peculiar to the order of knights were a horse maintained at the public expense, a ring of gold, and a garment with a narrow border of purple, called *angustus clavus*, in distinction from the *latus clavus* of the senators, which had a broader border of purple. It was reckoned a great indecorum for a knight to appear in public without his proper badges. The duties and functions of the *equites* were various in different periods of the republic: they were at first only a military order, and formed the cavalry of the Roman legions; afterward, in the time of the *Gracchi*, we find them a class of civil judges, and no longer a military order. Sylla again, in his arrangement of the republic, deprived the *equites* of their judicial tribunals, and they became the financiers-general of the revenues of the state.

If many of those institutions we have mentioned owed their origin to the political talents of Romulus, several of them plainly appear to have a strong conformity with the general usages of barbarous nations; and others which argue a more refined policy, were borrowed in all probability from the Etruscans; such in particular were those connected with religion.

The religion of ancient Italy was probably near akin to that of the Greeks; though Dionysius tells us that the early religious institutions of the Romans were not contaminated with those fables which disgraced the Greek theogony. The most scrupulous observance of omens and presages seems to have been the chief foundation of their sacred rites, and in this superstition they went far beyond the Greeks. Now divination we know with some certainty to have been adopted by the Romans from the Etruscans. Among that people everything was construed into a presage; not only the extraordinary phenomena of nature, as

thunder, lightning, the *aurora borealis*, or the like, but the most insignificant actions or accidents, such as sneezing, meeting with an animal, slipping a foot, or any of the most common occurrences of life. Among an ignorant and rude nation everything is attributed to a supernatural agency; but the Etrurians were not a rude nation, and therefore we can assign this national propensity only to their love of those national habits which they had derived from a remote antiquity. To a superstitious people, when presages do not offer of themselves, it is a very natural step to go and seek them. The sacrifice of victims presented often different appearances, according to the accidental state of the animal at the time it was killed. The priests employed in the sacrifice, being best acquainted with those appearances, are naturally consulted as to their interpretation. Thus they acquire the reputation of superior wisdom and foresight, and the *augur* (soothsayer) and *aruspex* (diviner) become an established profession. Where a society is once formed, it becomes interested to support itself; the trade is found lucrative, and the science of course is studiously made intricate and obscure, to exclude the attempts of uninitiated pretenders.

As bad omens presented themselves frequently as well as good, it became a desirable object of science to know how to avert the effect of the latter, and to convert them into presages of good fortune. The augurs pretended that they possessed this valuable secret, which gave them still greater influence over the minds of the people. This effect they operated by expiations, which thus became an essential branch of religious ceremonies. Gradually, as the art advanced, a particular set of ceremonies was appropriated to particular occasions. Thus, for example, at the foundation of a city, the priests and all employed in the ceremony first purified themselves by leaping over a fire. Then they made a circular excavation, into which they threw the first fruits of the season,

and some handfuls of earth brought from the native city by the founders. The entrails of victims were next consulted, and if favourable, they proceed to trace the limits of the town with a line of chalk. This track they then marked by a furrow, with a plough drawn by a white bull and heifer. It was not anciently the custom to surround the city with walls, but the limits were defended by towers, placed at regular intervals. In aftertimes, however, the practice became common of fortifying the city by a wall. The ceremony was concluded by a great sacrifice to the tutelar gods of the city, who were solemnly invoked. These gods were termed *Patrii* and *Indigetes*,* but their particular names were concealed with the most anxious caution from the knowledge of the people. It was a very prevalent superstitious belief that no city could be taken or destroyed till its tutelar gods abandoned it. Hence it was the first care of a besieging enemy to evoke the gods of the city or entice them out by ceremonies, by promising them superior temples and festivals, and a more respectful worship than they had hitherto enjoyed; but in order to accomplish this evocation it was necessary to learn the particular names of the deities, which every people therefore was interested to keep secret.

As all the superstitions we have mentioned were common to the nations of Italy before the building of Rome, it was extremely natural that they should be adopted as part of its theology.

In treating formerly of the Spartan constitution, I have marked the error of those theories which attempt to trace all political institutions whatever up to the manners of a savage state; or the belief that all forms of government, and, by the same rule, all the revolutions of those governments, are the result of the natural progress of mankind in society. The most lim-

* Names signifying that they were the local or peculiar gods of the city.

ited knowledge of history gives us certain proof of many political systems being the operation of the genius of individual lawgivers. If we doubt as to the institutions of Lycurgus, of Charlemagne, or of Alfred, being as perfect as history has painted them, skepticism itself cannot refuse the instances of William Penn and of Peter the Great, any more than those stupendous experiments in government and legislation which our own age has witnessed.

But as to Romulus, we readily allow that the great outlines of his constitution have their model in the manners and usages of a semi-barbarous people. The *patria potestas* of the Romans, or the sovereign power which every father of a family enjoyed over his household, may be plainly traced up to the manners of barbarians. So likewise many of the early laws of the Romans were the necessary result of their situation. Such, for example, was that law which confined the practice of all mechanic arts to the slaves; for all the free citizens must either have been employed in warfare or in the culture of their fields.

But other institutions bear the stamp of political knowledge and enlargement of ideas. Such for instance is the *Clientela*, or the connexion of patrons and clients. To maintain a just subordination, and at the same time a mutual good understanding between the patrician order and the plebeians, every plebeian was allowed to choose a senator for his patron, whose duty it was to defend and protect him; and he in his turn received from his clients, not only homage, but support and assistance in all cases where his interest required it.

Notwithstanding the excellence of this political arrangement, the enemies which the infant state of Rome had raised up among the neighbouring nations of Italy would have been too powerful for her, if they had followed any united plan or general measures. The rape of the Sabine women had exasperated all around them; but as each nation, instead of uniting,

attempted to pursue a separate plan of revenge, they were all successively defeated. The town of Cennina was destroyed, and its inhabitants transplanted to Rome. The Crustumenians, in like manner, contributed to increase the victorious city; though Romulus chose likewise to preserve their own city, and to establish a colony in it, thus gaining a double advantage. The Sabine nation was the most formidable of their enemies. In one successful assault upon the city, they had penetrated as far as the Tarpeian hill, and a most obstinate conflict was maintained in the very heart of Rome, when the Sabine women, the cause of the war, threw themselves in between the contending parties and became the mediators between their husbands, and their fathers and brethren. Their influence prevailed; a peace was concluded, and the two nations agreed henceforth to become one people.* Tatius, king of the Sabines, was associated with Romulus in the government; a most wise and politic measure, which relieved Rome at once of her most formidable enemy, and greatly increased her strength and population. Thus, in a very few years from the period of her foundation, Rome was able to make head against the most powerful of the nations of Italy.

Tatius did not long enjoy his dignity. He was killed a few years afterward at Lavinium, and Romulus remained sole monarch of the united people. He made war against the Veientes with success, and subdued several of the states of Latium: but having disobliged his soldiers in the distribution of the conquered lands, and some of the principal senators becomming jealous of his power, a conspiracy was formed against him, and he fell a victim to treason, in the thirty-seventh year of his reign. A violent storm of thunder

* In honour of this event, a solemn annual festival was held at Rome on the first day of March, called *Matronalia*. It is to this solemnity that Horace alludes in his ode, *Martiis cœlebs quid agam Calendis*, "a bachelor on the Calends of March, what shall I do?"

happening at the time, favoured the report spread by the conspirators that he was killed by lightning; and the people who revered his memory enrolled him among the number of their deities, by the title of Quirinus.*

As Romulus left no children, the people judged the crown elective, and the question was whom to choose. The Sabines claimed an equal right with the Romans; and, there being much discordance of opinion, the senate, which was composed equally of both nations, laid claim to the sovereignty, and dividing themselves into Decuriæ, it was agreed that each decuria should reign fifty days, or each senator five days—an arrangement which it was easy to see could not be permanent. The people submitted to it for a year, but at the end of that period declared their resolution to have a sovereign for life. It was agreed that the senators of the Roman party should have the right of electing, but that the choice should fall upon a Sabine. Numa, the son-in-law of Tatius, a man of a recluse and reserved disposition, but of great reputation for wisdom and probity, was chosen king; and after a solemn consultation of the gods by the augurs and aruspices, was publicly invested with the regal *insignia* and authority.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus has represented Numa as a wise and most intelligent prince: others have disputed that character, on this extraordinary ground, that when the books of Numa were accidentally discovered at Rome, after the lapse of six centuries, the senate ordered them to be destroyed, as containing nothing which, in their judgment, could be useful, and much that might be of prejudice to the state. But this fact certainly warrants no inference unfavourable to the character or to the talents of Numa. The po-

* Contemporary with Romulus was Hezekiah, the tenth king of Judah; and Salmanazar, who took Samaria, and put an end to the kingdom of Israel, by carrying the ten tribes into captivity.

litical views and regulations of that prince might be extremely wise, and well adapted to the age in which he lived, and at the same time quite unsuitable to the spirit of the Roman constitution six centuries after him.

Numa was of a pacific turn, and he seems to have aimed at giving his people the same character. It may be doubted whether this policy were altogether wise in the situation in which the Romans stood with respect to their neighbours. The king pretended to enjoy a divine inspiration, and feigned that he was indulged in nightly conferences with the nymph Egeria, who dictated all those public measures which he proposed. He multiplied the national gods, built new temples, and instituted a great variety of religious ceremonies, of the most remarkable of which it is necessary, for the proper intelligence of the Roman history, that some short account should here be given.

A custom then prevailed in Italy, by which every state, before going to war, was in use to determine whether the cause of the war were just or unjust. When a quarrel arose between one state and another, certain heralds, named *Feciales*, were despatched by the state which deemed itself injured to the aggressor, who publicly proclaimed the cause of offence, and demanded reparation of the injury. If the aggressor hesitated, ten days were allowed for deliberation, and that term was three times renewed. If at the end of that period justice was not done, the *Feciales* took the gods to witness of the wrong committed, and returned to their own city. War was then solemnly proclaimed—but was not commenced till one of the *Feciales* walked to the frontier, and threw a bloody javelin as a signal.

This custom shows that the petty nations of Italy, barbarous as they were, had just notions of the blessings of a pacific government. Numa adopted the custom, and instituted at Rome a college of *Feciales*. He built likewise a temple to *Janus*, which was kept

open during war, and shut during peace. Most of the institutions of this prince were calculated to encourage the pacific spirit; but this was not the tendency of his people, and their character soon became quite the reverse. A great part of Numa's policy consisted in using religion as an instrument of government.* He instituted a college of priests called *Flamines*, from the flame-coloured tufts upon their caps.† Each flamen was confined to the worship of a particular god; and Romulus, now deified, had his flamen, as well as Jupiter and Mars. A sacred buckler, or *ancile*, which was said to have dropped from heaven, gave occasion likewise to the foundation of a new college of priests, who had the charge of it, and paraded with it, on particular occasions, in a kind of dance or procession. These were called Salii, dancers (from *saliendo*); and, lest the sacred buckler should be stolen or lost, eleven others were made, exactly resembling it, and deposited in the temple of Jupiter.‡

* Yet the religion of Numa, according to Plutarch's account, was of a rational character, and quite remote from the superstitions of the vulgar. "He forbade the Romans," says that author, "to represent the Deity in the form of man, or of any animal, nor was there any sculptured effigy of the gods admitted in those early times. During the first one hundred and sixty years, they built temples and shrines, but made no images; judging it impious to represent the most excellent of beings by things base and unworthy, since there is no access to the Divinity but by the mind, elevated and purified by Divine contemplation."

† Plutarch supposes the word *flamen* a corruption of *pilamen*, from *pileus*, a cap. There were at first only three Flamines, *Flamen Dialis*, *Martialis*, and *Quirinalis*—the priests of Jupitre, of Mars, and of Romulus.

‡ The *Salii* were originally twelve in number; but Tullus Hostilius, the successor of Numa, added other twelve. Those first instituted were called Salii Palatini, from the Palatine Hill, where they began their processions: the latter were termed *Collini*, or Agonenses, from the *Collis Quirinalis* (the Quirinal hill), otherwise called *Agonalis*, where they had

The veneration of *fire* was a superstition common, as we have seen, to several of the ancient nations. The custom of preserving this element continually burning was religiously observed among the nations of Italy, as among their eastern progenitors. Numa found this custom among the people of Alba; and introducing it among the Romans, he built a temple consecrated to Vesta, and appointed four virgins to attend her worship and to preserve the sacred fire. They took a vow of perpetual virginity, and were buried alive if they broke it. A punishment of this kind was extremely rare; but when it occurred it was a day of mourning to all the citizens. The ignominy of the crime was thought to affect all the relations of the criminal; and it was no wonder that, when a new vestal came to be chosen, every father dreaded lest the choice should fall upon his daughter. On the other hand, these sacred virgins enjoyed very high privileges. They were superior in sanctity of character to all the priests, and in some respects even controlled the laws of their country. A vestal could save a criminal going to execution, provided she gave her word that she had met him only accidentally. It was customary for individuals to make large donations from motives of piety, or to leave them great legacies; and thus they often accumulated much wealth.

Numa is celebrated for a reformation of the Roman calendar, which, it is said, made the year, before his time, consist only of ten months, of various lengths; some of them, according to Plutarch, consisting of twenty days, some of thirty-five, and some of a greater number. Numa added to the year the months of January and February, assigning to each month the number of days of which it consists at present. February being the most deficient, was always reckoned

a chapel. Their endowments were great, and their entertainments costly; whence the phrase *Dapes Saliares* is used by Horace for delicate meats, lib. i. O. 37.

an unlucky month. He distinguished likewise certain days as *Fasti* (lucky or lawful), and *Nefasti* (unlucky or unlawful); on the former of which it was lawful to follow all civil occupations, while nothing of that sort was allowed on the latter except agriculture, which thence seems most wisely to have been regarded in a religious point of view. From this distinction of *Dies Fasti et Nefasti*, (lucky or lawful, and unlucky or unlawful days,) the calendar itself took the name of *Fasti*, or annals. It was the office of the Pontifex Maximus (the High Priest) to record in the *Fasti* the events of each year.

Numa died after a reign of forty-three years, during the whole of which time the temple of Janus remained shut; so much does the disposition of a people depend on the character of a sovereign.*

After a short interregnum, Tullus Hostilius was elected to the throne by the people, and confirmed by the voice of the senate. This prince, of a very opposite character from his predecessor, paid little regard to his religious and pacific institutions. The temple of Janus was opened, and was not shut during his whole reign. He was victorious over the Albans, Fidenates, and several of the other neighbouring states. In the war with the Albans happened the celebrated combat between the three Horatii and Curiatii, in which the issue of the contest was determined in favour of the Romans, by the courage and policy of the surviving Horatius. The victor, returning to Rome laden with the spoils of the vanquished, was met by his sister, the destined spouse of one of the Curiatii. On seeing the spoils of her dead lover, she vented her grief and indignation in such violent terms, that her brother put her to death. "Be gone," said he, "to thy lover, and carry with thee that de-

* Contemporary with Numa, was Sennacherib, king of Assyria, and Esarhaddon, who united the kingdoms of Assyria and Babylon.

generate passion which makes thee prefer a dead enemy to the glory of thy country." The offender was brought before the *duumviri*, two criminal judges appointed by Tullus, and was by them condemned to death. By the advice of Tullus, he appealed to the assembly of the people, who in compassion to the deliverer of his country, commuted his punishment to passing under the yoke, and at the same time decreed him a trophy. This incident shows one fact of importance, namely, that the power of the people had at this time become paramount to that of the prince, and that the government truly lay in the joint concurrence of the regal authority with that of the several orders of the state.

Under the reign of Tullus, as we find the Romans at war with the Sabines, it appears that the union of the two nations was by this time dissolved; and, henceforward, we find the Sabines classed among those of the neighbouring states with whom the Romans carried on constant hostilities.

The neglect of religion during the reign of Tullus is said to have excited the vengeance of the gods, who punished the Romans by a severe pestilence. The king himself was seized with it, and became as pious as his predecessor; but his repentance was too late, for he was killed by thunder, or as some authors report, by a fire in the city, after a reign of thirty-three years.

Ancus Martius, of Sabine extraction, was elected king in his place. He was, by his mother, grandson to Numa; and partook somewhat of his disposition. He bent all his attention to the revival of the religious observances of his ancestor; but the Latins obliged him to take up arms. The Romans were victorious, and took several of the enemy's towns, transporting the inhabitants to Rome, of which it became necessary to enlarge the bounds beyond the Aventine Mount. Ancus pushed his conquests along the banks of the Tiber to its mouth, where he built the city and

port of Ostia. He fortified a small eminence opposite to Rome, on the western side of the Tiber, which was called *Janiculum*, and communicated with the city by a bridge, (in Latin pons) which the priests had the charge of supporting and repairing; and thence they are said to have derived their name of *Pontifices*.*

Ancus died after a reign of twenty-four years. During his time, *Lucius Tarquinius*, surnamed *Priscus*, a native of Tarquinii in Etruria, and son of a rich citizen of Corinth, had come to Rome. He was a man of great address, and gained the favour both of the king and people; so that when the throne became vacant, he was chosen the successor of Ancus; a proof that the throne was considered as elective; for Ancus Martius had left two sons.

The senate, as first constituted by Romulus consisted, as we have seen, of one hundred members. To this original number, from whom alone the patrician families claimed their descent, Romulus afterward added another hundred. Tarquinius, who owed his election to the favour of some of the principal citizens, rewarded their services by adding a hundred new members to the senate, chosen from the plebeian order.† It remained at the number of three hundred for several centuries, down to the period of the Gracchi, when it was enlarged to six hundred. I shall have occasion afterward to treat more particularly of the constitution of this body.

Rome was now gradually advancing in population and power; but her progress was not so rapid as to alarm the other states of Italy. In the time of the elder Tarquin, there were frequent wars with the Sa-

* Contemporary with Ancus Martius were Draco, the Athenian legislator; Periander, tyrant of Corinth; and Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, father to Nebuchadnezzar.

† These new senators were termed *Patres minorum gentium*, (Patricians or fathers of the lower order) but this distinction was lost in process of time, and all were regarded as equal in point of rank.

bines, Latins, and Etruscans which generally terminated to the advantage of the Romans; but the vanquished nations were always very speedily in a condition to renew hostilities.

The city itself was increasing very much in extent and magnificence. Tarquin caused the walls to be built of hewn stone; he surrounded the *forum* with a covered corridore or arcades of pillars; he built the Circus Maximus, or Hippodrome, for the celebration of public games, for races and athletic exercises. This building was situate between the Aventine and Palatine hills. It was enlarged and embellished at different times; and in the age of the elder Pliny, was capable of containing two hundred and sixty thousand spectators, all seated. Tarquinius Priscus likewise constructed the *cloacæ*, those amazing drains or common sewers, which remain to this day the wonder of all who view them. The *cloaca maxima* (the great sewer) is sixteen feet in width, thirteen in depth, and of hewn stone arched over. Works of this kind would seem to lead to the belief of a prodigious increase of this city in size and population, when such immense structures were formed within the period of one hundred and fifty years from its foundation. But these appearances certainly afford rational ground for a different conclusion or conjecture. The immensity of those *cloacæ*, so unsuitable to such a city as we must suppose Rome to have been in the days of the elder Tarquin (for Livy acknowledges that they were judged unsuitable, from their large size, to the extent of the city, even in his time,) naturally induces a suspicion, that those works were the remains of a more ancient and much more splendid city, on the ruins of which the followers of Romulus had chosen to settle. The like we know to have taken place in different parts of Asia, where several of the greatest cities of antiquity, after they had gone to decay, and been for ages desolate and uninhabited, have revived after a period of many centuries, and from villages grafted on their

ruins, have become pretty considerable towns, though far inferior to their ancient size and magnificence. Were we here to offer a conjecture, it would be, that the foundation of Rome is to be carried back many ages beyond the commonly received era, and that this city had anciently been the residence of a part of that great and polished nation, the Etruscans.

Tarquin, during some of his wars, had vowed to erect a temple to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva; but he lived only to see the work begun. In digging for the foundation of this structure, on the top of the Tarpeian hill, the scull of a man was found—a very ordinary occurrence, but which the augurs declared to be a presage that Rome was one day to become the head, or mistress of the universe. The new temple was from this incident called *Capitolium.** If the anecdote is true, it shows how early the Romans entertained views of empire and dominion.

Tarquin had adopted a young man, Servius, the son of a female captive, and had given him his daughter in marriage. He was a youth of talents, and soon gained the esteem both of the senators and people; so that there was every prospect of his succeeding to the throne upon the death of his father-in-law. Two sons of Ancus Martius were yet alive, who naturally looked likewise toward that dignity, to which they endeavoured to pave the way by assassinating Tarquinius Priscus. This treasonable act they perpetrated in the thirty-eighth year of his reign; but their crime did not meet with the reward of success.†

* From caput, signifying head.

† In the time of the elder Tarquin, Nebuchadnezzar made the conquest of Jerusalem, and carried the Jews into captivity. Solon, in the same period, was employed in new modelling the constitution, and giving laws to the republic, of Athens.

CHAPTER II.

Servius Tullius, sixth king of Rome—His Political talents—Artful division of the People into Classes and Centuries—The Census—Lustrum—Tarquinius Superbus—End of the Regal Government—Reflections on this Period—Constitution of the Senate—Narrow Territory of the State—Exaggerated Accounts of its Military Force—Uncertainty of its early history.

SERVIUS TULLIUS had very naturally cherished the ambitious design of mounting the throne, upon the death of his father-in-law. On that event, he thought it prudent to employ some artifice. He gave out that the king, though dangerously wounded, was still alive, and had empowered him, in the meantime, to administer the government, and to bring to punishment his assassins. He procured, accordingly, a sentence of death to be pronounced on the sons of Ancus; but they escaped their fate by flying from Rome, and seeking an asylum among the Volscians. Servius thus rid of his competitors, proclaimed the king's death, and found no obstacle to his elevation to the vacant dignity.

As the succession of Servius had wanted all the usual formalities, there having been no regular election by the people, nor any inauguration by the usual consultation of the auspices, the new sovereign wisely bent his whole attention to ingratiating himself with his subjects by every method that could procure popularity. He paid the debts of the poorer citizens by dividing among them such lands as were his own property, and others of which they had been illegally deprived by the richer citizens. He adorned the city with useful edifices; he was successful in the wars carried on with the neighbouring nations; and the people, pleased with the moderation he showed in the exercise of power, soon forgot his usurpation.

It is remarked by Montesquieu, as one cause of the

rapid advancement of Rome in the first ages of her state, that all her kings were great men. Servius Tullius was a prince possessed of superior political abilities. There is nothing more worthy of attention than the measures he took for the reformation of those abuses which had gradually arisen from the indeterminate nature of the Roman constitution, and particularly that artful and ingenious arrangement of the people into classes and centuries, by which he contrived to throw the whole power of the state into the hands of the superior order of citizens, without injury or offence at the same time furnished to a numerous populace, whose happiness is best consulted by removing them from all actual concern in the machine of government. Of this arrangement it is necessary for the proper intelligence of the revolutions of the Roman commonwealth that a particular account should here be given.

From the time that the Romans had associated the Sabines and the people of Alba to the rights of citizens, the urban and the rustic tribes were composed of three distinct nations, each of which had an equal share in the government. Each tribe being divided into ten *curiæ*, and each *curia* having an equal vote in the comitia or public assemblies, as every individual had in his *curia*, all questions were determined by the majority of the suffrages of individuals. There was no pre-eminence or distinction between the *curiæ*, and the order in which they gave their votes was determined by lot.

This was a very equitable and reasonable arrangement so long as there were few distinctions among the citizens, and no great inequality of fortunes. But when riches came to be unequally distributed, it was easy to foresee numberless inconveniences from this equality of power. The indigent, or the worthless, would court every revolution which gave them a chance of bettering their fortunes; and the rich had an easy road to the gratification of the most dangerous

ambition by purchasing by bribery the votes of the poor.

One grievance, likewise, which was very severely felt under the former constitution, was, that all taxes were paid by the head, without regard to the unequal wealth of individuals. This impolitic and unjust distribution, of which the poor had the highest reason to complain, furnished Servius with an excellent pretence for effecting that reformation which he meditated. He undertook to remove easily the poorer citizens from all share in the government, by exempting them from all public burdens, and making these fall solely on the rich.

After explaining to the people at large the necessity as well as the justice of regulating the taxes and contributions of individuals according to their measure of wealth, he required, by a public edict, that each citizen should declare, upon oath, his name, his dwelling, the number of his children, their age, and the value of his whole property, under the penalty of having his goods confiscated, being publicly scourged, and sold for a slave.

After this numeration, which was called *census*, Servius divided the whole body of the citizens without distinction of rank, birth, or nation, into *four tribes*, named, from the quarters where they dwelt, *Palatine*, *Suburran*, *Collatine*, and *Esquiline*. These comprehended only such as dwelt within the city. He formed other *tribes* of such as enjoyed the privileges of Roman citizens, but lived without the walls, or in the country. Of these the number is uncertain, some authors making the rustic tribes amount to fifteen, others to seventeen, and others again to twenty-six. The number probably varied, according as the Romans extended their frontier. These rustic tribes are frequently mentioned in the Roman history. It is only necessary to remark at present, that in early times it was held more honourable to be included in

those of the city; but this distinction did not always continue.

Besides this local division from the places where the different citizens had their dwelling-houses, Servius divided the whole body of the people into six *classes*, and each class into several *centuries;* but these classes did not each contain the same number of centuries. It is to be observed that a century was so termed, not as in itself consisting of one hundred men, but as being obliged to furnish and to maintain that number of soldiers for the service of the state, in time of war. In the first class there were no less than ninety-eight centuries. These were the richest citizens; such as were worth at least one hundred *minæ*, about one thousand three hundred and thirty dollars. The second class consisted of twenty-two centuries, and comprehended such as were worth seventy-five *minæ*, about one thousand dollars. The third class contained twenty centuries, of such as were worth fifty *minæ*, or six hundred and sixty dollars. The fourth, of twenty-two centuries, or such as were worth half that sum; and in the fifth were thirty centuries of those worth twelve *minæ*, or one hundred and sixty dollars. The last class, though the most numerous of the whole, formed but a single century; and under this class were comprehended all the poor citizens. Thus the whole body of the Roman people was divided into one hundred and ninety-three centuries—or portions of citizens so termed, as furnishing and supporting each one hundred soldiers in time of war. The last class, the poor citizens, were exempted from all taxes and public burdens; they were called *Capite Censi*, as only making up a number; or were sometimes termed *Proletarii*, as contributing to the use of the state only by raising progeny. The other classes were rated for their proportions of the public taxes, at so much for each century. The military centuries of the different classes formed separate bodies of distinct rank; those of the first class being

the highest, and those of the last the lowest; they were distinguished likewise by the arms they bore. The one-half of each century of soldiers, namely, those above forty-five years of age, were reserved for the protection of the city.

It was very evident that the poorer citizens had no reason to complain of this new establishment, which exempted the greater part from all taxes, and proportioned the burdens of the rest to their share of wealth; but there was something necessary to indemnify and conciliate the rich. For this purpose, Servius ordained that in future the people should be assembled and give their votes by centuries; the first class, consisting of ninety-eight centuries, always having the precedence in voting. Such was the arrangement of the *Comitia Centuriata*,* in which, henceforward, the chief magistrates were elected, the laws framed, peace and war resolved on, and, in a word, in which the supreme power of the state was vested. The *Comitia Curiata*,† where the people were assembled by *Curiæ*, were now held only for the election of some of the priests, and a few of the inferior magistrates. The *Comitia*, or assemblies of the people, were held in the *Campus Martius* (field of Mars), without the city. The people walked thither preceded by their officers and *insignia*, in all the order of a military procession, but without arms. The king alone had the power of calling these assemblies, of tenconsulting the auspices.

As in the *Comitia Centuriata*, all the centuries, or the whole body of the people, were called to the assembly, the whole of the citizens seemed to have an equal share in the public deliberations. Yet this was far from being the case. The poorer classes came necessarily to be deprived of all influence in the public measures: for as there were in all the six classes one hundred and ninety-three centuries, and the first

* Assemblies in which the people gave in their votes by centuries or hundreds.

† Assemblies where they voted by whole courts.

class consisted of no less than ninety-eight of these, who always gave their votes first, if these were of one mind, which generally happened in important questions, the suffrages of the rest were of no avail, and were not asked. If the first class was not unanimous, the second came to have a vote; but there was very rarely any opportunity for the inferior classes to exercise their right of suffrage. Thus the whole power of the state was artfully removed from the body of the people at large to the richer classes; and such was the ingenuity of this policy, that all were pleased with it. The rich were willing to pay for their influence in the state, and the poor were glad to exchange authority for immunities. They were satisfied with the appearance of consequence which they enjoyed by being called to the *Comitia;* and it was not till ambitious men, to use them as instruments, for their own designs, rendered them jealous of their situation, that they began to express any discontent.

The *Census* was concluded by a ceremony called *Lustrum*, or an expiation. The king presided at the sacrifice of a bull, a ram, and a hog, which were first led three times round the Campus Martius. Hence the sacrifice was called *Suovetaurilia*, or sometimes *Taurilia*. It was performed every *five* years, and thence that period was termed *Lustrum*.

Religion had been the earliest bond of union among the states of Greece. Temples had been erected at the common charge of the different republics, which accustomed them to consider themselves as one nation. After this model Servius undertook to unite the states of Latium. In order that they might regard Rome as a metropolis, he persuaded them to build at their common charges a magnificient temple to Diana on the Aventine Mount, and to repair thither once a year to perform sacrifice. Thus the Romans contracted a strict alliance with the Latian states, which mainly contributed to increase their power. Servius was a genuine and enlightened patriot. In all the changes

which he operated on the constitution of the state, he had no other end than the public good. Of the disinterested nature of his conduct he had prepared to give the most effectual demonstration, by resigning the crown, and returning to the condition of a private citizen, when, to the regret of his subjects, he fell a victim to the most atrocious treason. His infamous daughter, Tullia, married to Tarquinius, the grandson of Priscus, conspired with her husband to dethrone and put to death her father; and this excellent prince was assassinated after a reign of forty-four years.

Tarquinius had gained the throne by the foulest of crimes, and he resolved to secure himself in it by violence. He acquired from his manners the surname of *Superbus*, proud, pride being the usual attendant of tyranny and cruelty. Montesquieu has attempted to vindicate the character of this tyrant, and even to eulogise his virtues, as Lord Orford has displayed his talents in a vindication of our English Tarquin, Richard III., and both nearly with the same success. We may admire the ingenuity of the advocate who tries his powers in such arduous attempts, but we cannot judge them entitled to praise. Let the man of ingenuity stand forth as the champion of virtue, which too often suffers from the envenomed tooth of envy and detraction. In this benevolent office he will find abundant scope and exercise for his talents: but to lessen the criminality of the avowedly vicious—to exculpate from one or from a few slight offences where the blackest crimes have deservedly consigned a character to infamy, in such attempts there is much demerit; for the salutary horror of vice is thus weakened and diminished, and virtue herself is defrauded by lessening the value of her just reward.

The government of Tarquinius was regulated by principles totally opposite to those of his predecessor. He was in every sense a despot. With considerable military talents, he was successful in his wars against the Volsci and Sabines, the Latins of Gabii, and other

enemies of the Roman state; and he used these conquests to ingratiate himself with the soldiery, to whom he allowed free scope to ravage and plunder in the course of hostilities; but the daily encroachments which he made on the liberties of all ranks in the state, and the extreme severity and cruelty he displayed in support of an arbitrary control, soon rendered him the object of universal detestation. The more powerful of the citizens, who from their influence with the people excited the fears and jealousy of the tyrant, were on various pretences arraigned and put to death. Others, against whom there was no pretext for a judicial accusation, were privately assassinated. Thus he put to death the father and the brother of *Lucius Junius*, two of the most respectable of the citizens. Lucius himself, to escape a similar fate, counterfeited fatuity, and thence acquired the denomination of *Brutus*.

This most sanguinary tyrant, whose enormous offences daily called for vengeance from an injured people, was yet suffered to reign for twenty-four years, and was at length punished for a crime which was not his own. His son Sextus, equally lawless and flagitious, had violated Lucretia, the wife of Collatinus, and the injured matron, unable to survive her dishonour, stabbed herself in the presence of her husband and kindred. Brutus, a witness to this shocking scene, drew the dagger from her breast, and swore by the eternal gods to be the avenger of her death—an oath immediately taken by all who were present. The dead body of the injured Lucretia was brought into the forum, and Brutus, throwing off his assumed disguise of insanity, appeared the passionate advocate of a just revenge, and the animated orator in the cause of liberty against tyrannical oppression. The people were roused in a moment, and were prompt and unanimous in their procedure. Tarquinius was at this time absent from the city, engaged in a war with the Rutulians. The senate was assembled, and pronounced a decree which

banished for ever the tyrant, and at the same time utterly abolished the name and office of king. This decree was immediately confirmed by the people in the Comitia, who at the same time added to it a tremendous sanction, devoting to the infernal gods every Roman who should by word or deed endeavour to counteract or invalidate it.

Such was the end of the regal government at Rome, which had subsisted for two hundred and forty-four years. On this first period of the Roman history I shall here offer a few reflections.

The constitution of the Roman government was at first nominally monarchical; but in fact the kings of Rome seem to have enjoyed but a very moderate share of those powers which ordinarily attend the monarchical government. We have seen that the regal dignity was elective, and that the choice resided in the people. It was the senate who most frequently proposed the laws, but it was the people in their Comitia who ratified them; nor could the king, without consent of the people, proclaim war or peace. These rights of the people we find acknowledged by the people without dispute; nor does it appear, till the reign of the last Tarquin, that any attempts were made, upon the part of the throne, to extend the monarchical authority so limited and restrained.

A constitution thus attempered is not naturally the result of the first union of a savage tribe; and hence has arisen the idea of extraordinary political abilities in the founder of this monarchy, Romulus, to whom several writers have chosen to attribute the whole formation of a system which it is more reasonable to believe was the slow growth of time and of experience. With these authors, no lawgiver is supposed to have ever proceeded upon a more extensive acquaintance with the nature of the political establishments of different states, or a juster estimate of their merits and defects, than Romulus, a youth of eighteen, in that system of regulations which he laid down for those rude shep-

herds or robbers whom he is said to have assembled and formed into a community.

These romantic notions have, I believe, originated in a great measure from an implicit reliance on the account of the origin of the Roman state given by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, whose work, however ingenious, and in many respects estimable, is by no means to be relied on as a sure authority in tracing the early history of Rome, which he himself confesses that he has founded chiefly upon ancient fables, treated with neglect or passed over by other writers. Indeed the fables which he relates carry their own confutation along with them; for what fiction can be more absurd and incredible than to suppose an ignorant and rude youth, the leader of a gang of banditti, or the chief of a troop of shepherds, immediately after he had reared the turf walls of his projected city, calling together his followers, and delivering a laboured and methodical oration on the nature of the different kinds of government, such as he had heard existed in Greece and other nations, desiring his hearers seriously to weigh the advantages and defects of those different political constitutions, and modestly concluding with a declaration that he is ready to accede with cheerfulness to whatever form they, in their aggregate wisdom, may decree? On this absurd fiction Dionysius rears the structure of a finely attempered constitution, all at once framed and adopted by this troop of barbarians; a beautiful system, judiciously blending monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. Dionysius, however, has, with singular injudiciousness, discredited his own authority, by making a foolish parade of the motives which induced him to compile his history. He owns that his chief object was to render his work a pleasing and popular composition; something that might flatter the pride of the Romans, and inspire his own countrymen, the Greeks, with a high idea of the dignity of their conquerors. "The Greeks," says he, "deceived by vulgar report, imagined that the founders of

Rome were barbarians, and vagabonds without house or home, and those too the slaves and dependants of their leader. To efface these impressions from the minds of my countrymen, and engage them to entertain more just notions, so as not to repine at being subject to a people who, from superiority of merit, have a natural right to the dominion over all others, I undertake this work. Let them cease to accuse fortune of this dispensation, since it is agreeable to an eternal law of nature that the strong should be the rulers of the weak. My countrymen will now learn from history that Rome had scarcely sprung into existence when she began to produce myriads of men, than whom no state, either Grecian or barbarian, ever reared more pious, more just, more temperate, more brave, or more skilful in war. But these wonderful men," continues he, "are unknown to the Greeks from the want of an historian worthy to record their merits."* It will be readily allowed that a preface of this nature is not fitted to increase our opinion either of the truth, the candour, or even the judgment of the historian.

To return:—The notions, therefore, which some modern writers, relying on the authority of Dionysius, have adopted, of the wonderful political talents of Romulus, and that judicious temperament he is supposed to have made between the power of the sovereign, the authority of the senate, and the rights of the people, seem to be little else than a chimera. The first political institutions of the Roman state were, like those of every other, simple and inartificial; suited to the immediate wants, and corresponding to the exigencies of a rude tribe, first forming itself into a regular community; but of whom, individual members had probably been the exiles or fugitives from a state enjoying some degree of civilization and subject to laws and institutions, which they were thus enabled to impart to the new society they had agreed to form,

* Dionys. Hal, Ant. Rom., lib. i.

and of which they had chosen Romulus to be the chief, or sovereign. The fabric of the Roman government, such as we find it within the period of any history we can deem authentic, was, like every other, the gradual result of circumstances, the fruit of time and of political emergency.

The early constitution of the Roman senate has given occasion to much learned disquisition. The most judicious writers have candidly confessed, that, with regard to the original mode of electing its members, they pretend to nothing more than conjecture; as the ancient authors have been sparing in their information, extremely obscure, and often contradictory in their accounts. The most probable opinion seems to be that of the Abbé Vertot—that, during the regal government, the kings had the sole right of nominating the senators; that the consuls succeeded them in this power; and that, when these magistrates became too much engaged in war to attend to domestic policy, that privilege devolved upon the censors. The senators were, at first, always chosen out of the order of the patricians; that is, out of those families descended from the first *Centum Patres* who are supposed to have been named by Romulus. But afterward, the right of election to that dignity became common to the people, and was among the first of those privileges to which they obtained an equal title with the patricians. The authority of the senate, in the first ages of the commonwealth, was very extensive. No assembly of the people could be held but in consequence of their decree; nor could such assembly take any matter under consideration that had not first been debated in the senate. It was even necessary, in order to give the *Plebiscita*, or *decrees of the people*, any effect, that they should be confirmed by a second decree of the senate; and hence, with apparent justice, the government of the Romans, during the earlier times of the republic, has been termed rather an *aristocracy* than a democracy.

From this exorbitant power of the senate the first

diminutions were made by the tribunes of the people, as we shall soon see; but this was not without a violent and lasting struggle on the part of the senate to maintain what had been their original rights; those privileges, however, which remained always in the senate, and which the people never pretended to call in question, were very extensive. The senate always continued to have the direction of everything that regarded religion: they had the custody of the public treasure, and the absolute disposal of it: they gave audience to ambassadors, decided the fate of vanquished nations, disposed of the governments of the provinces, and took cognizance, by appeal, of all crimes committed throughout the empire. In one particular, upon great emergencies, their authority was truly supreme and despotical. In times of imminent danger, the senate issued its decree, *Dent operam Consules, ne quid Respublica detrimenti capiat;* the consuls enact, that no harm happen to the Republic: a decree which gave to these chief magistrates a supreme and unlimited power for the time, independent both of the senate which conferred it, and of the people. Such were the acknowledged powers of the Roman senate through the whole period of the commonwealth. It was, in fact, a perpetual council, whose province it was to superintend all the magistrates of the state, and to watch over the safety of the republic. Yet in the more advanced times of the commonwealth, the senate always made a show of acknowledging the last, or executive power to be lodged in the people; *Senatus censuit, populus jussit;* the senate deliberates, the people decide: although this may fairly be supposed to be nothing more than a piece of affected moderation; since we know that they retained the full exercise of those powers we have mentioned, even after all the encroachments of the people, down to the times of the Gracchi (A. U. C. 620), when their authority suffered, indeed, a great abridgment.

Toward the end of the regal government, the ter-

ritory belonging to the Roman state was extremely limited. It is said to have been only forty miles in length and thirty in breadth. The progress of the Romans in extending their frontier was at first extremely slow. Time was requisite for subduing nations as warlike as themselves; and the methods both of making conquests and preserving them were little known. This was the reason why the first care of the Romans, most wisely, was to strengthen themselves in their possessions. It would have weakened them too much had they early attempted to extend their boundaries. The only use they yet made of their victories was to naturalize the inhabitants of some of the conquered states, and thus increase their population. By this wise forbearance they became a powerful state, though within a narrow territory; because their strength was always superior to their enterprises. They derived likewise, from the small extent of their lands, a spirit of moderation and frugality. It was thus they paved the way for extending their limits afterward with advantage; and this judicious policy of choosing at first to possess rather too small than too extensive a territory, laid the solid foundation of their future greatness.

But with regard to the real forces or strength both of the Romans and of their rival states in those early times, we are, on the whole, extremely ignorant. The Roman historians appear to have exaggerated greatly in these particulars. We find in those authors, that, notwithstanding very bloody engagements, the Romans, as well as their enemies—the Latins, Sabines, Æqui, and Volsci—take the field the next campaign with armies still more numerous than before. Yet the cities and territories which furnished those armies were extremely inconsiderable. The country to which they belonged was not remarkable for its fertility; and in such a state of perpetual warfare, the inhabitants, constantly intent on ravaging and pillaging, could not possibly cultivate it to advantage.—

We have every reason, therefore, to believe that the numbers of those armies said to have been brought into the field are greatly exaggerated.

The frequent, and indeed incessant wars between those neighbouring nations and the Roman state during the early periods—continually renewed, in spite of repeated treaties, and many signal, and apparently decisive victories—are subjects of just surprise. M. Montesquieu has assigned a very ingenious cause for this disregard of treaties. It was a maxim among the states of Italy, that treaties or conventions made with one king or chief magistrate had no binding obligation upon his successor. This, he says, was a sort of law of nations among them. It were to be wished that ingenious writer had given some special authority for this very singular fact, instead of contenting himself with saying in general that it appears throughout the history of the kings of Rome.

In the subsequent periods of the Roman history, hostilities more generally commenced upon the part of the Romans than on that of their neighbours; of which there seems to have been this simple cause, that the chief magistrates, the consuls, being changed every year, it was natural for every magistrate to endeavour to signalize himself as much as he could during the short period of his administration. Hence the consuls were always persuading the senate to some new military enterprise; and that body soon became glad of a pretext which, by employing the people in an occupation they were fond of, prevented all intestine disquiets and mutinies. That this continual engagement in war, and consequent characteristical military spirit of the Romans, was owing to nothing else than their situation, is rendered the more probable from this fact, that, excepting a small circle of the states immediately around and in their vicinity, which necessarily contracted the same military spirit, all the other nations of Italy were indolent, voluptuous, and inactive

The regal government among the Romans subsisted for 244 years, and during all that time only seven kings are said to have reigned. This statement is extraordinary; and the more so when we consider that there was no hereditary succession, where sometimes an infant succeeds to an old man; but each king was advanced in life when he ascended the throne; that several of them died a violent death, and that the last of them lived thirteen years after his expulsion. These are circumstances which have suggested considerable doubt with regard to this period of the Roman history; and it must be acknowledged that, even during the first five centuries from the alleged period of the building of Rome, we can be very little assured that the detail of facts which is commonly received on the authority of Livy and Dionysius is perfectly authentic. It is an undisputed fact, that during the greater part of that time there were no historians. The first Roman who undertook to write the history of his country was Fabius Pictor, who lived during the second Punic war, (A. U. C. 535, and B. C. 218,) to which period he brought down his work; but the materials from which it was compiled were, if we may credit Dionysius, in a great measure traditionary reports; nor is his chronology to be relied on. We know, indeed, with some certainty, that there were no authentic monuments of the early ages at this time existing among the Romans. Livy tells us, that almost all the ancient records of their history perished by fire when the city was taken by the Gauls. This author, therefore, with great candour, gives his readers to understand that he does not warrant the authenticity of what he relates of those ancient times. "It has been allowed," says he, "to antiquity to mix what is human or natural with the divine or supernatural, and thus to magnify or exalt the origin of empires; but on such traditions I lay little stress; and what weight or authority may be given to them I shall not here stop to consider."*

* Datur hæc venia antiquitati, ut miscendo humana divinis

From such and similar considerations, some critics have gone so far as to reject as entirely fabulous the whole history of those first five hundred years of the Roman story: but this is to push the skeptical spirit greatly too far. There is, indeed, a mist of doubt hangs over the origin of this great people, as over that of most of the ancient nations; and it is the part of sober and discriminating judgment to separate what has the probability of authenticity from what is palpably fabulous, and thus to form for itself a rational creed, even with regard to those ages where the materials of history are most deficient. It is not unreasonable to conceive that the great outlines of the revolutions and fortune of nations, in remote periods of time, may be preserved for many centuries by tradition alone, though extremely natural that, in this traditionary record, the truth may undergo a liberal intermixture of fable and romance.

CHAPTER III.

Interregnum—Consuls appointed with sovereign power—Conspiracy against the new Government—Patriotism of Brutus—Valerian Law—War with Porsina—Popular disturbances—Debts of the Poor—A Dictator appointed—Impolitic conduct of the Patricians—Their concessions—Tribunes of the people created—Change in the Constitution—Reflections on.

TARQUINIUS SUPERBUS had trampled on all the constitutional restraints, and on all the regulations of the preceding sovereigns. He had never assembled the senate nor called together the people in the *Comitia.*

primordia urbium augustiora faciat.—Sed hæc et his similia, utcunque animadversa aut æstimata erunt, haud equidem in magno ponam discrimine.—*Liv. Hist.*, lib i. *Procm.*

He is even said to have destroyed or broken the tablets on which the laws were written, in order to efface all remembrance of them. It was necessary, therefore, after his expulsion, that new tables should be framed and these, we may presume, were much the same with the former.

An interregnum took place for some time, and during this time the supreme power was lodged by the Senate in the hands of Lucretius. Brutus having in his possession some writings of Servius Tullius, containing, as it is said, the plan of a republican government, these were read to the senate and people, and approved of. The regal government had become completely odious, and it was agreed to commit the supreme authority to two magistrates, to be annually elected by the people out of the order of the patricians. To these they gave the name of *Consules;* a modest title, says the Abbé de Vertot, which gave to understand that these magistrates were rather the counsellors of the republic than its sovereigns, and that the only point which they ought to have in view was its preservation and glory. But, in fact, the authority of the consuls differed scarcely anything from that of the kings. They had the chief administration of justice, the absolute disposal of the public money, the power of convoking the senate and assembling the people, of raising troops, naming all the officers, and the right of making peace, war, and alliance; in short, unless their authority was limited to a year, they were in every respect kings. The consuls wore the purple robe, they had the *sella curulis*, or ivory chair of state, and each of them was attended by twelve lictors armed with the fasces, the symbols of their power of life and death. The two first consuls were Brutus, and Collatinus, the husband of Lucretia.

These magistrates, we have said, were elected out of the body of the patricians; an exclusive privilege which, in fact, rendered the constitution purely aristocratical. But the jealousy of the people was not yet

alarmed; and they were so well pleased to be freed from the despotic power of a single tyrant, that it did not occur to them that they had anything to dread from a multitude of tyrants.

On this change of the government solemn sacrifices were performed, the city was purified by an expiation or lustrum, and the people renewed their oath against the name and office of king. Tarquin was at this time in Etruria, where he prevailed on two of the most powerful cities, Veii and Tarquinii, to espouse his cause. These states sent ambassadors to Rome with a formal requisition, that the exiled prince might be allowed to return and give an account of his conduct; but as it must have been foreseen that such a proposal could meet with no regard, the true purpose of the embassy was to secure a party in the interest of Tarquin, who might co-operate in a meditated attempt to restore him to power; and this purpose they gained by a liberal employment of bribes and promises. The conspiracy, however, was detected; and it was found that among the chief persons concerned were the two sons of Brutus, and the nephews of Collatinus. An example was now exhibited, severely virtuous indeed, but which the necessity of circumstances required and justified. Brutus himself sat in judgment upon his two sons, and condemned them to be beheaded, himself witnessing their execution. *Exuit patrem ut consulem ageret, orbusque vivere, quam publicæ vindictæ devesse maluit.** Such is the reflection of Valerius Maximus, but that of Livy is more natural; he remarks that Brutus, resolute as he was in the performance of this severe duty, could not lay aside the character, nor suppress the feelings of a father. *Quum inter omne tempus pater, vultusque et os ejus spectaculo esset, eminente animo patrio, inter publicæ pœnæ mi-*

* "He sacrificed the feelings of a father to the obligations of chief magistrate, and preferred a childless old age to any failure of his duty to the state."

*isterium.** Collatinus had not strength to imitate that example, and his endeavour to avert the punishment of his nephews procured his own deposition and banishment.

War was now the last resource of Tarquin; and, at the head of the armies of Veii and Tarquinii, he marched against the Romans. He was met by the consuls Brutus and Publius Valerius, who on the death of Collatinus had been chosen in his room, and an engagement ensued in which Brutus lost his life. The fate of the battle was doubtful; but the Romans claimed the victory, and Valerius was honoured with a triumph, a ceremony henceforward usually conferred on a victorious general after a decisive engagement. A higher honour was paid to the memory of Brutus, for whom the whole city wore mourning for ten months.

So much was the ardour of liberty kept alive by the attempts of the exiled prince, and such the jealousy of the Romans, roused by the slightest indications of an ambitious spirit in any of the citizens, that Valerius, notwithstanding the high favour he enjoyed on account of his public services, had, from a few circumstances apparently of the most trifling nature, almost lost his whole popularity. He had neglected, for some time, to summon the *comitia* for the election of a new consul, and he had built a splendid dwelling for himself on the summit of the Palatine hill, which commanded a prospect of the whole city—strong symptoms, it was thought, of the most dangerous ambition. Whether, in reality, he entertained such designs as were attributed to him, may well be doubted; but it is generally believed that a hint of his danger made him at once so zealous a patriot, and so strenuous a champion for the rights of the people, that he thence

* "While all the time his looks betrayed the feelings of a father, the pure patriotism of his soul prevailed in the administration of public justice.

acquired the ambiguous surname of *Poplicola*. He pulled down his aspiring palace, and contented himself with a low mansion in an obscure quarter of the city. Whenever he appeared in public he ordered the consular *fasces* to be lowered before the people, and the axes to be laid aside, which henceforth were borne by the lictors only without the walls of the city. He caused a law to be passed, which made it death for any citizen to aim at the tyranny; he refused to take custody of the money levied for the expenses of war, and caused that charge to be conferred on two of the senators. But of all sacrifices to liberty, that which in fact most materially enlarged the power of the people was a new law, which permitted any citizen who had been condemned to death by a magistrate, or even to banishment, or corporeal punishment, to appeal to the people; the sentence being suspended till their decision was given. This law, which from the name of its author was termed *Valerian*, struck most severely against the aristocracy; and from this era we may date the commencement of the democratic constitution of the Roman government. (A. U. C. 244.—B. C. 510.)

For thirteen years after the expulsion of Tarquinius Superbus, the Romans were involved in continual wars upon his account. Of these the most remarkable was the war with Porsena, king of Etruria, who had taken arms in behalf of the exiled prince. The detail of this war by the Roman writers would be extremely uninteresting, were it not embellished by some romantic stories which have much the air of fable. Such are the defence of a bridge by *Horatius Cocles*, single, against the whole Etrurian army; the attempt to assassinate Porsena by *Mutius Scævola*, and the proof he gave of his fortitude by holding his hand in the fire till it was consumed; the story of Clelia the hostage, and her companions, who swam across the Tiber amid a shower of arrows;—beautiful incidents, but scarcely entitled to the credit of historical facts. Such examples, however, of invincible

resolution are said to have produced a striking effect on the mind of Porsena, and to have converted him from an enemy into a firm friend and ally of the Romans. Tarquin, nevertheless, found still a powerful support from the external enemies, and doubtless from some of the traitorous subjects of the republic. Thirty of the states of Latium continued still in his interest, and the war was carried on with as much animosity as ever.

The Romans were in the train of success when there arose among them such violent dissensions as had very near proved the most fatal consequences. As these domestic disturbances continued long to embroil the republic, and were the source of many important revolutions, it is proper to consider their origin with some attention.

We have already seen that in the time of Romulus, when the first partition was made of the lands, a certain proportion was reserved for the public uses, and the rest distributed among the people by equal shares of two acres to each Roman citizen. Afterward, when Rome was extending her territory, new partitions were made of the conquered lands, but not with the same impartiality and equality. A part was reserved for the use of the state, but the patricians generally contrived to get the rest into their hands, allowing no share to the inferior ranks of the people. These abuses became more frequent from the time of Servius's new arrangement, which gave the richer citizens an entire ascendancy in the state, and they increased still more from the time of the expulsion of the kings, when the government became, as we have seen, aristocratical. This inequality of property continually increasing, and the indigence of the lower classes obliging them frequently to contract debts, they found, in a little time, that they were stripped by the severity of their creditors even of those inconsiderable pittances of land from which they derived their subsistence. It was one of the

early laws of the Roman state, that a debtor who was unable to pay was delivered as a slave to his creditor; he was chained that he might not escape, and was employed in the hardest labour. The grievance was further increased by this flagrant injustice—that there was no law which limited the rate of interest on borrowed money, so that many of those miserable people, incurring at first a trifling debt, saw themselves stripped of all they possessed, and reduced to a state of the most intolerable servitude.

From complaints which they found entirely disregarded, they proceeded to mutiny, and to open and violent expressions of their indignation against the higher orders. The war required new levies, and the senate ordered that the people should enroll and arm in defence of the common liberties. These peremptorily refused the summons, declaring that they knew no liberties to defend, since a foreign yoke could not be more intolerable than the bondage they experienced at home.

The senate was assembled, and the matter solemnly deliberated. Some of the higher order generously gave their opinion for an entire remission of the debts of the poorer class of people; others opposed the proposal, as sanctioning a violation of faith, and a criminal breach of legal obligation. Appius Claudius, a violent and proud patrician, maintained that the people suffered nothing more than their deserts, and that if not kept in poverty they would be for ever factious and unruly. Amid these contending opinions the senate was at a loss what decision to pronounce. An alarm spread of the approach of the enemy to attack the city, and this report gave fresh spirit to the people. They persisted in their refusal to enter the rolls, and declared that if their grievances were not immediately redressed they would quit the city. The consuls found their authority of no avail, for the Valerian law had given every citizen whom they condemned a right of appealing to the people.

To evade the force of this law some extraordinary measure was necessary. The senate passed a decree ordaining the consuls to lay down their office, and enacting that in their room a single magistrate should be elected by the senate, and confirmed by the people, who for six months should be invested with absolute and unlimited authority. The people were assembled in the *comitia* by centuries, an arrangement which, as we have seen, threw the whole power into the hands of the higher ranks, and thus a decree was easily obtained which ratified the ordinance of the senate; the lower ranks, perhaps, flattering themselves that the new magistrate would procure a redress of their grievances. This is the first instance of the creation of a *dictator*, an expedient which we shall see was afterward in times of necessity very frequently resorted to. The senate appointed one of the consuls, *Clelius*, to choose the dictator, (a form henceforth always observed,) and he named to that office his colleague *Lartius*. The dictator chose for himself a lieutenant, or *magister equitum*, (general of horse); he made the twenty-four lictors resume their axes, a sight which struck terror into the people, and disposed them to submission and obedience. All the citizens, whose names were called by the dictator, were enrolled without a murmur. Four bodies of troops were formed, of which one was left for defence of the city, and with the other three the dictator took the field against the enemy. He had some successes against the hostile states, which paved the way for a truce for a year, and, in the meantime, Lartius returned to Rome and abdicated his office. In the year following, when the war was renewed, it was found necessary to recur to the same expedient. Aulus Posthumius was chosen dictator, who gained an important victory near to the lake Regillus, in which the two sons of Tarquin, Sextus and Titus, were slain. This put an end to all his prospects. He retired to *Cumæ* in Campania, where he died at the advanced

age of ninety; and the allied states now concluded peace with the Romans (A. U. C. 257.) In this year was held the sixth *census*, or numeration of the Roman people, by which it appeared that the number of the citizens capable of bearing arms was 157,700.

Till now, the senators had seen the necessity of keeping some measures with the people, lest they should exasperate them into the execution of a design they sometimes expressed of calling back the exiled Tarquins. As this fear was now at an end, the insolence of the higher orders daily increased. Appius Claudius, who was at this time consul, now openly avowed a resolution of breaking this mutinous spirit of the people, and reducing them to absolute submission. But this policy was no less absurd than it was tyrannical. The people from their vast superiority in numbers, had only to follow a united plan, to force the higher orders to compliance, with any measure on which they choose to insist. A striking incident, which had a powerful effect on their passions, gave them this spirit of union, and excited the most violent ferment in the commonwealth.

In the midst of the public assembly, a venerable figure, hoary with age, pale and emaciated, his countenance furrowed with anguish, and his whole appearance expressive of misery and calamity, stood up before the tribunal of the consuls, and prayed aloud for mercy against the oppression of an inhuman creditor. Disfigured as he was, his countenance was known, and many remembered to have seen him in the wars, where he fought with great courage, and had received many honourable wounds in the service of his country. He told his story with affecting simplicity. The enemy, in an incursion, had ravaged his little farm, and set fire to his cottage. Bereft of subsistence, he had borrowed, to support life, a small sum from one of the rich citizens; the interest had accumulated, and being quite unable to discharge the debt, he had delivered himself with two of his children into bondage. In

this situation he affirmed that his merciless creditor had treated him as the worst of malefactors; and throwing aside his garment, he showed his back all covered with blood from the recent strokes of the whip.*

This miserable sight roused the people to the highest pitch of fury. They rushed upon the consul's tribunal; and Appius would have been torn to pieces, had not the lictors cleared for him a passage and carried him off to a place of safety. His colleague, Servilius, a man of a moderate and humane spirit, endeavoured with tears in his eyes to appease the tumult, and pledged himself to the people to mediate with the senate in their behalf. Such was the state of Rome, when an alarm was given that the Volsci had entered the territory of the republic. The senate felt its weakness; they employed Servilius to treat with the people, and he gave them his promise that their grievances should be considered, and redressed as soon as the present danger was removed. They enlisted themselves under his standard, and marching against the Volsci, engaged and defeated them with considerable slaughter.

It had hitherto been customary, after every victory, where there was an acquisition of booty, to reserve a part of it for the use of the state; but Servilius, on this occasion, had thought it a wise policy to conciliate the troops by dividing the whole of it among them. Appius, with much indiscretion, thought proper to accuse him on that score to the senate, and to procure a vote of that body refusing him the honour of a triumph. Servilius felt the indignity, and in an assembly of the people in the Campus Martius, he complained to them of the senate's injustice. The people immediately brought forth the triumphal car, and placing him on it with high acclamations, conducted him to the cap-

* See Livy, lib. ii. c. 23, where this incident is most eloquently related.

itol with the usual pomp of a triumph. But this strong testimony of popularity did not ensure the continuance of their favour. As Servilius had now lost all credit with the senate by holding their authority in defiance, and hence found himself unable to make good his promise to the people of a redress of grievances, he soon became equally obnoxious to both parties.

The disorders, meantime, continued as violent as ever, and a new alarm from the enemy obliged the senate again to resort to the nomination of a dictator. Marcus Valerius, the brother of Poplicola, a man agreeable to the people, was chosen to that high office; and as his private sentiments were favourable to their cause, he had no scruple to engage his word for a redress of their wrongs, on condition of their following his standard.

The enemy was subdued, and he now required the senate to fulfil his engagements. But Appius, the stubborn opponent of every measure that was favourable to the people, prevailed to have this demand refused. There is, I think, some question whether the dictator, in virtue of that supreme power with which he was for the time invested, could not by his own authority have enforced this measure, for which his honour was engaged. But Valerius was an old man, and probably dreaded the consequences of so violent a procedure. He assembled the people, and, after doing justice to their bravery and patriotism, he complained that he was not allowed to keep his engagements with them, but declared that his authority should no longer countenance a breach of the public faith, and he immediately abdicated his office.

The people, thus repeatedly and shamefully deceived, were determined to be no longer the dupes of promises. The senate apprehensive of their spirit, had ordered the consuls not to disband them, but to lead them without the walls, on pretence that the enemy were still in the field. The soldiers, at the time of

their enrolment, took an oath not to desert their standards till they were formally disbanded; but this oath they eluded by taking their standards along with them. Under Sicinius Bellutus, one of their own order, they marched with great regularity to a hill at three miles' distance from the city, afterward called from that occurrence, the *Mons Sacer;* and here they were in a short time joined by the greatest part of the people.*

There can be nothing figured more arbitrary and more impolitic than the proceedings of the senate. Their pride was now humbled; they found there was a necessity for adopting the most lenient and conciliatory measures; and they deputed some of the most respectable of their order, who, after a difficult and laboured negotiation, were compelled at length to grant the people all they demanded. The debts were solemnly abolished; and for the security of the people in time to come, and a warrant against all new attempts or modes of oppression, they were allowed the right of choosing magistrates from their own order, who should have the power of opposing with effect every measure which they might judge in any shape prejudicial to their interest.

These new magistrates were to be elected annually, like the consuls. They were five in number,† and were termed *tribunes*, because the first of them were chosen from among the *tribuni militum*, the military tribunes, of the different legions. They had the power of suspending by a single *veto* the execution of any decree of the senate which they judged prejudicial to the interest of the people; they were not allowed, however, to interfere in the deliberations of that body, nor permitted even to enter the senate-house. The persons of these magistrates were declared sacred; but their authority was confined within the bounds of

* Dion. Hal., lib. v.; Livy, lib. ii., c. 32.

† About thirty years after, their number was increased to ten, and it so continued ever afterward.

the city and a mile beyond the walls. The tribunes demanded two magistrates to aid them in their office, and this request was likewise granted. These were called *Ædiles*, from the charge given them of the public buildings; and afterward they had likewise the care of the games, spectacles, and other matters of police within the city.

The creation of the Tribunes of the People is the era of a change in the Roman constitution. The Valerian law had given a severe blow to the aristocracy, or party of the patricians; and the creation of popular magistrates with such high powers had now plainly converted the government into a democracy. Had the people been mildly dealt with, the desire of a revolution had never taken place, and the patricians might have enjoyed their ascendancy in the state, to which time would always have given new confirmation. But the violence and unruly passions of a few leading men are capable of embroiling the most peaceful community, and awakening causes of discontent and jealousy which otherwise would have had no existence. The tyrannizing spirit of Appius Claudius, and the stubbornness of that faction of the rich who supported him, drove the people at length to desperate measures, and gave rise to that formidable and resistless opposition of which we have seen the effects.

A strong degree of jealousy had, from the first institution of the commonwealth, begun to rankle in the breasts of the people against the higher order. They saw, with a very natural indignation, that the patricians had supplanted them in all the offices of power and emolument; for, though there was a nominally free election to those offices in which the whole people had a right of suffrage, yet this, from causes already sufficiently explained, was in practice illusory. But the immediate cause of things coming to an open rupture was, as we have seen, the intolerable burden of the debts owing by the poor to the rich. This

grievance became at length so general, from the frequency of the military campaigns, in which every soldier was obliged to serve at his own charges, and from the ravages committed on the lands by the hostile armies, which reduced the poorer sort entirely to beggary, that the people began to look upon their order as born to a state of hereditary servitude. Hence that desperate measure of abandoning the city and encamping in arms upon the *Mons Sacer*. All that the people at this time desired was not power, but a relief from oppression and cruelty. And had this just claim been readily listened to, and a relief granted to them, if not by an entire abolition of the debts, at least by repressing the enormous usury, and taking away the inhuman rights of slavery and of corporal punishment, this people would, in all probability, have cheerfully returned to order and submission, and the Roman constitution might long have remained, what we have seen it was at first, aristocratical. But a torrent imprudently resisted will in time acquire that impetuous force which carries everything before it. The patricians, sensible that they had pushed matters to a most alarming extreme, and now thoroughly intimidated, were obliged to grant the demand of creating popular magistrates. The tribunate being once established, we shall see it become the main object with these magistrates to increase their own powers by continual demands and bold encroachments. The people, regarding them as the champions of their rights, are delighted to find themselves gradually approaching to an equality with the higher order; and no longer bounding their desires to ease and security, become soon equally influenced by ambition as their superiors, while that passion in them is the less subject to control that they have more to gain and less to lose. While this people borne down by hardships and oppression, seek no more than the redress of real grievances and a share of ease and happiness as the members of a free state.

we applaud their spirited exertions, and execrate that arbitrary and inhuman principle which prompted the higher order to treat them as slaves or inferior beings. But when we behold this people compassing at length by a vigorous and manly resistance the end they wished for—attaining ease and security, nay power, which at first they had not sought, and never dreamed of; when we see them, after this, increasing in their demands, assuming all that arrogance they justly blamed before, goaded on by the ambition of their leaders to aim at tyrannizing in their turn—we view with proper discrimination the love of liberty and its extreme, licentiousness; and treat with just detestation the authors of those pernicious measures, which embroiled the state in endless factions, and paved the way for a total loss of that liberty which this deluded people knew not to put a true value upon when they actually possessed it.

Some authors, and among the rest the Abbé Condillac, pretend to find in those perpetual dissensions and violent struggles between the patrician and plebeian orders at Rome, the true cause of the glorious and prodigious extension of her empire, and of all her subsequent grandeur and prosperity. This, though not an uncommon mode of reasoning, is by far more specious than it is solid. I would ask what shadow of necessary connexion there is between the factious disorders, and internal convulsions of a state, and the extension of her empire by foreign conquest? On the contrary, it seems a self-evident proposition, that while the one spirit exists, the other for the time is extinguished, or lies altogether dormant; for the ambition of domestic rule cannot otherwise be gratified than by a constant and servile attention to the arts of popularity, incompatible with the generous passion which leads to national aggrandizement. The people too, won only by corruption, and split by rival demagogues into factions, embittered against each other with the most rancorous hostilities, are incapable of

that cordial union to which every foreign enterprise must owe its success. The martial spirit may, no doubt, be kept alive, and find improving exercise in a civil war or rebellion; but this spirit finds too much exercise at home, to seek for employment in foreign conquests; and in the breasts of the leading men, those selfish motives, either of avarice or the love of power, which are commonly the sources of all civil disorders, are baneful to every generous and patriotic feeling, which seeks alone the true greatness or glory of the state.

In the present case, the true causes of the wonderful extension of the Roman empire will be sought in vain, in the perpetual contests between the higher and the lower orders. These, instead of being productive of national aggrandizement, were the immediate causes of the fall of the commonwealth and the ruin of civil liberty. The main source of the extension of the empire by its conquests, is to be found in the extraordinary abilities of a few great men, who, either in a subordinate station had too much worth to prefer a selfish interest to the glory of their country, or who spurning the more confined object of superior power at home, proposed to themselves a nobler and more glorious aim by extending the limits of that empire which they ruled as sovereigns.

It is not to be denied that other causes, likewise, contributed to the aggrandizement of the Roman empire. Several of these have been pointed out by Montesquieu. Such was, among others, the very power of those enemies they had to encounter; a power which must either have entirely oppressed and annihilated them, or forced them to that most vigorous and animated exertion to which they owed their successes. Such enemies were the Gauls, the Macedonians under Pyrrhus, and the Carthaginians under Hannibal. So far were the factions of the state from being the cause of those successes, and that rapid extension of empire, that it was the formidable power

of such external enemies that, lulling asleep for the time every source of domestic faction and disorder, enabled the republic to employ its whole strength, and make those spirited efforts to which it owed its most glorious successes.

CHAPTER IV.

Increase of the power of the Tribunes—They convoke an Assembly of the People—Coriolanus—Disputes on the Agrarian Law—Law of Volero—and change produced by it.

The disorders which we have seen allayed by the creation of the tribunes of the people, were only quieted for a very short space of time. We shall see them immediately renewed, and continued, with very little interruption, till the people acquired an equal title with the patricians to all the offices and dignities of the commonwealth. Thus, for a period of almost two centuries, the history of Rome, during every succeeding year, presents almost the same scenes; an endless reiteration of complaints, on account of the same or similar grievances; opposed by the same spirit, resisted by similar arguments, and usually terminating in the same way, to the increase of the popular power. As our object is to give rather a just idea of the character and spirit of nations, than a scrupulous detail, or minute chronicle of events, we shall, in that period, touch only on such circumstances as, while they are illustrative of the genius of the people, are necessary to form a connected chain of the principal events which had their influence on the revolutions and fate of this Republic.

The first tribunes of the people were created two hundred and sixty years after the foundation of Rome,

and seventeen years after the abolition of the regal government. These magistrates were habited like simple citizens; they had no exterior ensigns of power: they had neither tribunal nor jurisdiction as judges; they had no guards nor attendants, unless a single domestic termed *Viator* or *Apparitor* (*a pursuivant or marshal.*) They stood without the senate-house, nor durst they enter it unless they were called in by the consuls: but possessing, as we have said, the power of suspending or annulling, by a single veto, the most solemn decrees of that body, their influence and authority were very great.

Everything, for a little while, wore an appearance of tranquillity. The senators blindly applauded themselves on the success of their negotiation, as they saw the people pleased, and could see nothing to fear from those rude and simple magistrates, who had not even the outward symbols of power. But this delusion was of short continuance.

It was in the beginning of spring, that the people had retreated to the *Mons Sacer* (*sacred hill*); when it was customary to plough and sow the fields of the republic. As the lands had lain neglected during those commotions, it was not surprising that the following harvest should be a season of great scarcity. This, perhaps, the senate, by proper precautions, might have prevented. The tribunes accused that body of negligence, and of a design to raise a famine among the people, while the patricians, as they insinuated, had taken care of themselves, by laying in abundant supplies.

The consuls assembled the people, and attempted to justify the senate; but being constantly interrupted by the tribunes, they could not make themselves be heard. They urged, that the tribunes having only the liberty of opposing, ought to be silent till a resolution was formed. The tribunes, on the other hand, contended that they had the same privileges in an assembly of the people that the consuls had in a

meeting of the senate. The dispute was running high, when one of the consuls rashly said, that if the tribunes had convoked the assembly, they, instead of interrupting them, would not even have taken the trouble of coming there; but that the consuls having called this assembly, they ought not to be interrupted. This imprudent speech was an acknowledgment of a power in the tribunes to convoke the public assemblies; a power which they themselves had never dreamed of. It may be believed they were not remiss in laying hold of the concession. The took the whole people to witness what had been said by the consuls, and an assembly of the people was summoned, by the tribunes, to meet the next day.*

The whole people assembled by daybreak. Icilius, one of the tribunes, urged that, in order that they might be in a capacity of effectually fulfilling their duty, in protecting and vindicating the rights of the people, they should have the power, not only of calling them together, but of haranguing them without being subject to any interruption. The people were unanimously of this opinion; and a law to that purpose was instantly passed by general acclamation. The consuls would have rejected this law, on the score of the assembly's being held against all the established forms:—it had not been legally summoned, and there had been no consultation of the auspices; but the tribunes declared they would pay no more regard to the decrees of the senate, than the consuls and the senate should pay to those of the people. The senate was forced to yield, and the new law was ratified by the consent of both orders. Thus there were now established in the republic two separate legislative powers, which maintained a constant opposition to each other.

There was but one method by which the senate might, perhaps, have recovered their power. This

* Dion. Hal. l. c. Liv. lib. ii. Plutarch in Coriol.

was, by exercising their authority with such moderation and so much regard to the interests of the people, as to render the functions of the tribunes superfluous. But this was a difficult part to act. Being once supreme, they could not stoop to an abasement of power, and inflexibly struggling to maintain a prerogative which they wanted real strength to vindicate, they prepared for themselves only a greater humiliation.

One of the most violent of the senators was Caius Marcius, surnamed Coriolanus, from a successful campaign he had made against the Volsci, in which he had taken Corioli, one of their principal towns. Coriolanus had aspired to the consulate, but the people fearing his high and arrogant spirit, had excluded him from that dignity. Incensed at this disappointment, he took every opportunity of expressing his resentment; and in particular, declared openly in the senate, that the necessities of the people, occasioned by the present famine, furnished an opportunity which ought not to be neglected, of compelling them to relinquish all pretensions to authority, and to abolish their new magistrates.

The people, exasperated beyond measure, vowed vengeance against Coriolanus, and they summoned him to appear before them, and answer for his conduct. He refused, and the Ædiles had orders to arrest him, but were repulsed in the attempt by his partisans among the patricians. In a tumultuous assembly of the people, one of the tribunes proceeded, with a daring stretch of authority, to pronounce Coriolanus guilty of treason, and award a capital punishment: but the people themselves were sensible that this was going too far; they repealed this precipitate sentence; allowed him twenty-seven days to prepare his defence, and summoned him to appear before their assembly after the lapse of that term.

During this interval the consuls and the chief senators, who saw the dangerous consequences of violent

measures, endeavoured, by persuasion, to operate a good understanding between the orders. They laboured to convince the tribunes that it had hitherto been the constant practice, and agreeable to the constitution of the republic, that every public measure should originate by a motion in the senate, and that till this body had given a decree no business of state could be agitated in the assembly of the people. The tribunes did not acquiesce in these propositions: they contended that the authority of the people was co-ordinate with that of the senate; and that—the Valerian law having ordained a right of appeal to the people from the senate, and all magistrates—they must, of course, possess the right of citing before them any citizens who had offended. The affair was of difficult decision, in the uncomplying temper in which parties then stood. It was, however, thus compromised for the present. The tribunes agreed to make their complaint against Coriolanus in the senate, and that body consented, on their part, to refer the consideration of the cause back to the assembly of the people. This course, accordingly, was adopted. The senate admitted the importance (if proved) of the charges preferred to their body by the tribunes, and ordained Coriolanus to appear and answer in the assembly of the people. They were desirous, however, of procuring this assembly to be convoked *by centuries;* by which means they flattered themselves with an entire ascendant, which would ensure the acquittal of their member: but the people would not consent to it; the votes were called in the order of *the tribes;* and Coriolanus was condemned to perpetual exile.

He now proposed to himself a plan of vengeance, in the last degree ignominious, and which no injuries an individual can receive are sufficient to justify. He repaired to the camp of the Volscians, and offered his services to the determined enemies of his country. They were accepted; and such was the consequence

of his abilities as a general, that Rome in the space of a few months was reduced to extremity. The people now demanded that the senate should repeal their decree of banishment; but that body, with a laudable firmness, declared that they would grant no terms to a rebel while in arms against his sovereign state. The importunity of the populace, however, so far prevailed, that a deputation consisting of five persons of consular dignity, and his own relations, was sent to propose terms of accommodation. Coriolanus haughtily answered, that he would never consent to treat of peace, till the Romans should restore whatever they possessed of the Volscian territory, and he allowed the space of thirty days to consider of this proposition. At the end of that time he appeared again with his army under the walls of the city. The senate maintained an inflexible resistance to the demands of the traitor, and to the popular clamour. At length, a band of Roman matrons, at the head of which was Veturia, the mother of Coriolanus, with his wife and children, repaired to the camp of the enemy, and suddenly presented themselves at the feet of Coriolanus. The severity of his nature was not proof against this last appeal. He consented to lay down his arms; he ordered his troops to retire; and thus Rome owed her safety to the tears of a woman.

There are few historical *events* (so called) which give more room for skepticism than this story of Coriolanus. If we should admit that the resentment of his wrongs might have hurried a high-spirited Roman into a conduct so utterly disgraceful—and moreover so dangerous while his mother, his wife, and all his kindred were hostages in the hands of his countrymen—how can we believe that Rome, ever superior as we have seen her to the petty states which were her enemies, should, during the whole time of this lengthened negotiation, have taken no effective measures of resistance or defence; that we should

neither find a Roman general nor a Roman army in the field to check the triumphant pride of this traitor to his country; that the Volscians—who, three years before, were so weakened by a pestilence, that Velitræ, one of their most flourishing towns, would have been entirely annihilated, but for the supply of a colony of Roman citizens—should have now become so powerful as to strike terror and dismay into the Roman state, and compel her to that mean act of supplication, to which, we are told, she owed her escape from destruction? If there is any truth in a story so void of probability, there is only one circumstance truly deserving of attention—the striking contrast between the conduct of the senate and that of the people. The people—fluctuating in their opinions, and ever in extremes—the one day, in the height of exasperation against Coriolanus for an offence against themselves, condemn him to perpetual exile; and the next, ignominiously entreat his forgiveness and deprecate his resentment. The senate—who, before his condemnation, alarmed at what they thought a stretch of power in the people, would have done everything to save him, yet, sentence being once passed, conscious that the honour of the republic was her most valuable possession, which no danger ought to compel its guardians to betray—could by no entreaties be swayed to make concessions to a rebel in arms against his country. While such were the sentiments of her chief magistrates, Rome, weak and defenceless as we are told she was, continues still to command respect and admiration.

Historians are not agreed as to the fate of Coriolanus—a circumstance which renders the whole of his history more suspicious. According to some authors, he was assassinated by the Volscians, in revenge for his defection; according to others, he languished out his days among them in melancholy obscurity. It has never been asserted seriously that he returned to Rome.

The dissensions between the orders with which the Roman republic was destined to be for ever embroiled, were now rekindled from a new cause of controversy. This was an agrarian law, a measure proposed at first by Cassius, one of the consuls, from motives of selfish ambition. He aimed at nothing less than supreme power; and he proposed this measure of an equal partition of all the lands which had been at any time won from the enemy, as the most probable means of acquiring the favour of the people. But he was too precipitate; his views were suspected, and the tribunes gave the alarm. They could not bear that popular measures should be proposed by any but themselves; they adopted the scheme of Cassius; but persuaded the people that what was an interested measure upon his part, they were determined to prosecute for the public good.

The senate, jealous of the tribunes, and sufficiently aware of the views of Cassius, were resolved themselves to pre-occupy the ground. They passed a decree that an inquiry should be made as to those conquered lands which had at any time been adjudged to belong to the public; that a part should be reserved for the common pasturage of cattle, and that the rest should be distributed to such of the people as had either no lands, or but a small proportion. Yet this was all a piece of artifice on the part of the higher orders. They had no mind that this decree should ever be carried into effect. They subjoined to it a clause that the *consules designati*, or those who were next year to enter upon that office, should name *decemviri** for making the necessary investigation and following forth the decree.

This measure of an *agrarian law* we shall observe, from this time forward, to be a source of domestic dissensions, down to the very end of the common-

* The decemvirs were ten men chosen to govern instead of consuls—their office continuing for two years.

wealth. Cassius was the first proposer of it, and it cost him his life. His office of consul was no sooner at an end, than he was solemnly accused of aspiring at royalty; and by sentence of the popular assembly, he was thrown from the Tarpeian Rock, the usual punishment of treason. Soon afterward, Menius, one of the tribunes, brought on the consideration of the law. He called on the consuls to nominate the *decemviri;* and on their refusal, he opposed the levies which the consuls had ordered to be made on account of a war with the Æqui and Volsci. The consuls adopted a very violent procedure: they quitted the city, and established their tribunal without the jurisdiction of the tribunes. Thither they summoned the people to attend them, and to give up their names to be enrolled. They refused to obey; on which the consuls ordered their lands to be ravaged, and their flocks carried off. This had its desired effect; but so violent a measure was never again attempted. A more sure and less dangerous expedient was afterward followed, which was, to divide the tribunes. One tribune could, by his *veto*, oppose or suspend any decree; but if another opposed him, the *veto* was of no effect. Icilius, one of the tribunes, having opposed the forming of the levies, his four colleagues, gained over by the senate, took the opposite side; and it was therefore agreed that the consideration of the agrarian law should be postponed till the termination of the war.

When that period arrived, the contest was again renewed. The tribunes brought on the consideration of the law; they demanded why the last consuls had not named *decemviri;* and they even pretended to call them to account and to punish them for this omission. Genucius, a tribune, summoned the consuls of the current year to execute the decree which had been so long neglected. They refused, on pretence that a decree of the senate, when not executed by those consuls to whom it was directed, was held to be abroga-

ted. Genucius then summoned the consuls of the preceding year to answer for their conduct, and vowed, as is said, that he would prosecute them to his latest breath. They took care that he should keep his word, for the next day he was found dead in his bed. The people were made to regard this as a judgment of the gods, who thus expressed their disapprobation of the schemes of this factious tribune; and his colleagues were intimidated for some time from prosecuting his views, not less, perhaps, from the apprehension of human than of divine vengeance.

The consuls and senate trusting to the effect of this example, assumed a more rigid authority, and the levies were made with severe exactness. Among those whom the consuls had enrolled as a common soldier, was a man named *Volero*, who in a former campaign, had been a centurion, and was esteemed a good officer. He complained of the injustice done him in thus degrading him, and refused to obey. The consuls ordered him to be scourged, from which sentence he appealed to the people. One of the consular lictors endeavouring to arrest him was beaten off; and the people, tumultuously taking his part, broke the *fasces* and drove the consuls out of the forum. The senate was immediately assembled, and the consuls, demanded that Volero should be thrown from the Tarpeian Rock. The people, on the other hand, called for justice against the consuls for a breach of the Valerian law, in disregarding Volero's appeal to the people; and the contest lasted till the election of the annual magistrates, when Volero was chosen one of the tribunes. The person of a tribune was sacred, and that of a consul, when out of office, was not so; but Volero did not choose to limit his vengeance to the two consuls: the whole senate was the object of his resentment, and he resolved to strike a blow which they should never recover.

The election of the tribunes of the people had hitherto been held in the *comitia curiata*. Volero urged

that as these comitia could not be summoned but by a decree of the senate, that body might, on various pretences, postpone or refuse to summon them; that the previous ceremony of consulting the auspices was necessary, and these, the priests, who were the augurs, could interpret in any manner they chose; and that, lastly, it was always held necessary that whatever was done in those assemblies should be confirmed by a decree of the senate. He represented all these formalities as being nothing else than restrictions imposed by the senate on the popular deliberations—and proposed that henceforth the magistrates of the people should be chosen in the comitia called by tribes, which were exempt from all those restraints.

The senate, by throwing difficulties in the way, found means to retard for some time the passing of a law so fatal to their power; but their opposition was in the main ineffectual; for it passed at last, and with this remarkable addition, that all questions, in which the affairs of *the people* were agitated, should henceforward be debated in the *comitia tributa*, where the people gave in their votes by tribes.

This famous law of Volero completed the change in the constitution of the Roman republic. The supreme authority from this time may be considered as having passed from the higher orders into the hands of the people. The consuls continued to preside in the comitia held by centuries; but the tribunes presided in those assemblies in which the most important business of the commonwealth was now transacted. The senate retained, however, a considerable degree of power. They had the disposal of the public money they sent and received ambassadors—made treaties—and their decrees had the force of a law while not annulled by a decree of the people. In a word, this body continued to have respect, and at least the appearance of authority, which we shall observe to have yet its effect in frequently restraining the violence of the popular measures. The consuls too, though in

most points of effective power and authority subordinate to the tribunes, had yet in some particulars a vestige of supremacy. They were absolute at the head of the army, and first in command in the civil authority within the city. Their office still carried with it that external show of dignity which commands respect and submission, and which, over the minds of the multitude is frequently attended with the same influence as substantial power.

CHAPTER V.

An Agrarian Law never seriously projected—Decemviri proposed to digest a Code of Laws—Cincinnatus—Appointment of Decemvirs—Laws of the Twelve Tables—Tyranny of the Decemvirs—Infamous conduct of Appius Claudius—Death of Virginia—Abolition of the Decemvirate.

THE people having now attained so very considerable an increase of authority, might certainly have prevailed in obtaining the favourite measure of an agrarian law. But the truth is, this measure was nothing more than a political engine, occasionally employed by the popular magistrates for exciting commotions, and weakening the power of the patricians. It was a measure attended necessarily with so much difficulty in the execution, that few even of the people themselves had a sincere desire of seeing it accomplished. The extensive disorder it must have introduced in the territorial possessions oft he citizens, by a new distribution of all the lands acquired by conquest to the republic since the time of Romulus; the affection which even the poorest feel for a small patrimonial inheritance, the place of their nativity, and the repository of the bones of their forefathers; and that most admirable and most salutary persuasion that it is an act of

impiety to alter or remove ancient landmarks;* all these were such obstacles to the accomplishment of that design, that it could never be seriously expected that the measure would meet with that effectual support which was necessary to carry it into execution.

The tribunes, well aware of those difficulties, and fearing that from too frequent repetition the proposal would become at length so stale as to produce no useful effect, bethought themselves of a new topic to keep alive the spirits of the people, and to foment those dissensions which increased their own power and diminished that of the patricians.

The Romans had at this time no body of civil laws. Those few which they had were only known to the senate and patricians, who interpreted them according to their pleasure, and as best suited their purposes. Under the regal government the kings alone administered justice: the consuls succeeded to this part of the royal prerogative, so that they had in fact the disposal of the fortunes of all the citizens. Terentius or Terentillus, one of the tribunes, in an assembly of the people, after a violent declamation on public grievances of all kinds, and particularly on that dreadful circumstance of the lot of the people, that in all contests with patricians they were sure to suffer, as the latter were both judges and parties, proposed that, in order to remedy this great evil, ten commissioners, or *decemviri*, should be appointed to frame and digest a new body of laws, for defining and securing the rights of all the different orders—a system of jurisprudence

* The ingenious fable related by Ovid, *Fast.* lib. ii. v. 667, is a proof of this prevalent belief. The purport is, that when the capitol was founded in honour of Jupiter, all the other gods consenting to retire and abandon their right in the place, the god *Terminus* alone refused and kept his post. The moral drawn is, that what Jupiter himself could not remove, should yield to no human will or power.

binding alike on consuls, senators, patricians, and people.

This proposition, having essential justice and good policy for its foundation, was received by the people with loud applause. It had been prudent in the higher orders to have given it no opposition, as in reality no solid objection could be made to it. But there was always a party in the senate who made it a settled principle to oppose everything which was either beneficial or grateful to the people; as in most factions, the conduct of the different partisans is influenced less by considerations either of political expediency or moral rectitude, than by a uniform purpose of abasing and mortifying their antagonists.

The proposal, therefore, met with opposition; and the consequence was, that the people, regardless of the previous formality of a decree of the senate, passed the law of Terentius in an assembly of the tribes. The senators protested against this as a most presumptuous and unconstitutional innovation. The law of Volero, it is true, which allowed all questions regarding the popular interest to be deliberated on in the *comitia tributa*, seemed in effect to confer on the assembly of the people so held the right of legislation, but the exercise of such a right, immediately and originally in the people, had been hitherto without example. The patricians, too, might have urged with justice, that if they were not allowed to have the right of making laws to bind the people without their consent, neither could the people possess a similar right to bind the patricians. Influenced by such considerations, some young men of the patrician order, headed by Cæso Quintius, the son of L. Quintius Cincinnatus, burst in arms into the midst of the comitia, and beating down all before them, dispersed the assembly. For this offence Cæso was banished by a decree of the people.

These intestine disorders, which persuaded the en-

emies of Rome of her general weakness, induced the Sabines to form a design of surprising and taking possession of the city. A body of four thousand men entered Rome during the night, seized upon the capitol, and invited all such citizens as were oppressed by the tyranny of their superiors to join them and vindicate their freedom. A great proportion of the people actually deliberated on this proposal: so true it is that the factions of a state never fail to extinguish the patriotic spirit. The senate ordered the people to arms; and the tribunes countermanded that order, declaring that, unless the consuls should immediately agree to the nomination of commissioners for the laws, they were determined to submit without resistance to the dominion of the Sabines. Publius Valerius, one of the consuls, pledged himself to the people for the performance of this condition; and the people, now taking arms, attacked and cut to pieces the Sabine army. But Valerius unfortunately fell in the engagement, and his colleague having come under no obligation, refused to comply with the popular desire. A successor was chosen to Valerius in the consulate, L. Quintius Cincinnatus, a man of great resolution and intrepidity, who, though himself so indigent as to cultivate with his own hands his paternal fields, and to be called from the plough to put on the robe of the consul, had yet the high spirit of an ancient patrician, which was ill disposed to brook the insolence of the popular magistrates, or acquiesce in the daily increasing pretensions of the people.

Cincinnatus took a new method to bring the people to submission. He declared to the soldiers—who were yet bound by their *sacramentum*, or oath of enrolment—that he intended to carry on the war against the Æqui and Volsci, and that, for that purpose, they should winter under their tents; that he was determined not to return to Rome till the expiration of his consulate, at which time he would nominate a dicta

tor, to secure the continuance of good order and tranquillity.

The people, who, in all their military expeditions had never been above a few weeks at a time under arms, were thunderstruck when they heard of a winter campaign. The relinquishment of their families and the neglect of their lands, which must necessarily be followed by a famine, were considerations most seriously alarming. They now inveighed bitterly against their tribunes, who had brought matters to this extremity, and even made a proposal to the senate, agreeing to drop the Terentian law altogether provided that body should prevail on the consul to depart from his purpose. On that condition, Cincinnatus consented to postpone the war; and the consequence was, that during his consulate everything was tranquil, and the equity of his administration made the want of laws be for a time entirely forgotten.

Two years afterward, the republic owed her preservation to the same Cincinnatus. The Æqui had surrounded a consular army, and reduced it to extremity. Cincinnatus was chosen dictator: he defeated the enemy; and compelling them to lay down their arms, made their whole army pass naked under the yoke. In reward of this signal service, he was honoured with a triumph; his son Cæso was recalled from banishment, and he abdicated his dictatorship within seventeen days.

But this opposition to the strong will of the people produced only a temporary obstruction to the force of a stream whose current was irresistible. It was the care of the tribunes perpetually to present to the minds of the people some new object to be attained, and they now proposed that such part of the *Aventine Mount* as remained unoccupied by individual proprietors should be distributed among the poorer citizens. The consuls having delayed to propose this matter in the senate, Icilius, one of the tribunes, sent his appa-

ritor to summon the consuls to convoke that assembly for the purpose in view. The consuls might have contemned this presumptuous summons, and so made the tribune sink under the consequence of an abortive stretch of authority, which had no support in established right or usage; but they were imprudent enough to cause their lictors to strike the apparitor with his fasces. This was a violation of the sacred character and office of the tribunes. The lictor was arrested—the senate met to allay the disturbance. It was a small matter that the people obtained their request of the Aventine Mount; but the serious and deep-felt consequence of this affair was, that from that moment the tribunes—they who were wont to sit at the door of the senate-house till called in by the consuls—now claimed and acquired a right of convoking that assembly at their pleasure.

The tribunes had this advantage over all the other magistrates, that they could be continued in office as long as the people chose. Icilius had now been tribune for six successive years; when, emboldened by repeated experiments of his power, he attempted to subject the consuls to the tribunal of the people. A tumult having arisen on account of the levies, Icilius ordered the consuls to be carried to prison, for having seized some of the people whom he wished to protect from enrolment. The patricians flew among the crowd, and drove back the tribunes and their attendants. Icilius hereupon accused the consuls of having committed sacrilege against the tribunes, and insisted that the senate should oblige them to appear before the people in the *Comitia*, and submit to whatever penalty the latter should deem proper to inflict. This bold enterprise might have succeeded, had it been possible to keep alive the same ardour with which the people seemed at first to be animated; but reflection having time to operate, the people still felt a degree of reverence for the first magistrates of the state, which made them look upon this as a species of re-

bellion. Icilius very soon perceived this change in their disposition, and was prudent enough to make a merit of sacrificing his resentment to the public tranquillity. To support his power, which might have suffered from the defeat of this bold attempt, he resumed the subject of the Terentian law, and insisted for an immediate nomination of decemvirs. After some fruitless essays of opposition by the patricians, which, as usual, ended to their disadvantage, the senate was at length forced to acquiesce in the measure. Deputies are said to have been sent into Greece, to obtain accurate information as to the constitutions of the several republics, and particularly to form a collection of the laws of Solon. These, it is said, returned after a year's absence; and it was then agreed to create *decemviri*, to frame and digest such ordinances as they should judge most proper for the Roman commonwealth.* It was thought necessary that these magistrates should, for one year, be invested with sovereign power; during which time, all other magistracies, even the tribunate, which used to subsist during the dictatorship, should cease; and that they alone should have the power of making peace and war. They were to be restrained only in one article —that they should not abolish the *sacred laws;* that is, those which had been made in favour of the people.

Menenius, the consul, in order to create some obstacle to the conclusion of this important measure, proposed that the decemvirs should be named by the consuls of the succeeding year, and this being agreed to, the patricians took care that the consuls should be such as were believed to have no favourable disposition toward the popular cause. Appius Claudius and

* The testimonies for this embassy into Greece are Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus; but the silence of all the Greek writers with regard to this remarkable deputation, creates a suspicion of the fact being void of foundation: nor is there any such resemblance between the laws of Solon and those of the XII. Tables, as to countenance this popular story.

Titus Genucius, were elected consuls. But Appius disappointed the expectations of his party; for, instead of opposing the creation of decemvirs, he solicited that office. He offered, for himself and his colleague, to renounce the consulship, and proposed, in order to remove all grievances, that the same laws should be enacted for patricians and people. The people now applauded Appius to the skies. The comitia were called by centuries, a circumstance which confined the office to the order of the patricians. Appius Claudius and his colleague were first nominated, and the remaining eight were, like them, senators and consular persons. The people expected a great deal from the professions of Appius; and the senate was pleased in thinking that his ambition would find a strong restraint from the opposition of his colleagues.

Thus, the earnest desire of the people was at length gratified by the creation of the *decemviri*. It is somewhat difficult to account for the active part taken by the tribunes, in the creation of this new magistracy; a dignity and power which was to supersede and extinguish their own. It is not improbable, that the part which they took in this matter proceeded from no other motive than the general policy of fomenting animosities between the orders, which they found most frequently gave occasion to an extension of their own power and influence; they never seriously expected to obtain their demand; and were, indeed, mortified at their own success. But what is most surprising is the cordial concurrence latterly shown, by both the orders, in vesting those new magistrates with such plenitude of power, as furnished them with the means they actually made use of, to annihilate all authority but their own, and render their office perpetual.

The *decemvirs*, in the first year of their magistracy, laboured, with much assiduity, in the compilation of the laws. And when their work was completed, they divided these, at first into *ten*, and afterward into *twelve* tables. Of these Laws of the Twelve Tables,

of which the name is illustrious, it is necessary to give some account, and of the sources from which it is probable they were compiled.

During the time of the regal government at Rome, we know very little of what was the state of the laws. In all probability, these were nothing else than a few regulations, called forth by the exigence of circumstances, and suggested by the particular cases which came before the judicial tribunals. A large mass of rules might thus be accumulated; but these, being framed on no general principles, would often, in their application to new cases, be found to err against material justice. No application of reason or philosophy had ever been made to the discovery of legal principles; for every rule was only the decision of an individual judge, according to what appeared just and equitable in the case before him. It has been a question agitated between the partisans of the popular cause and the advocates for the extension of the powers of monarchy, whether the kings of Rome were absolute, both in their legislative and ministerial capacity; or whether, in order to ratify such laws as they had the right of suggesting and proposing, it was necessary to obtain the consent and sanction of the people. In a question, to which, from the uncertainty of all that regards the early history of the Romans, it is not possible to give a positive answer, and where the opinions of historians are nothing more than their own conjectures, we may be allowed, like them, to reason according to what appears most probable. Since, therefore, it is a certain fact, that the regal dignity itself was elective, and that the choice lay in the people, it seems a natural presumption, that the people, acquiring and retaining so important a right, would not have abandoned every other article of their power or consequence. At the same time, it must be owned, that the right of electing the kings does not appear to have been a conventional prerogative of the people; but to have been, probably, the consequence

of the first king's dying a violent death, without leaving children—a circumstance which must necessarily have occasioned an election to the vacant office. But be this as it may, it is certainly probable, that the people who elected the official lawgiver would likewise assume or reserve to themselves some restraining or controlling influence in the laws to be enacted. The kings, we therefore suppose, submitted to the consideration of the people in the comitia, those laws which they were desirous of enacting, and took their sense by the majority of suffrages.

These laws, after the expulsion of the Tarquins, were collected into one body by Papirius or Papisius, a patrician; and from him took the name of *Jus Civile Papirianum* or *Papisianum.** But in the beginning of the commonwealth, such was considered to be the imperfection of this code and its want of authority, that it fell entirely into neglect, and all judicial proceedings were regulated either by custom or the opinions of individual magistrates. In this situation the want of a regular system of jurisprudence, which should be a standard of procedure to all the judges, and a known and fixed rule of conduct for the people, began to be universally felt. Commissioners, as we have seen, were at length appointed to frame and digest such a code.

The Decemviri engrossed in their collection several of the ancient laws of the kings. They retained likewise all the more recent laws which had been passed in favour of the people, as that was a condition stipulated at the time of their appointment to office: and on the report of the deputies said to have been sent into Greece for collecting the laws of the different republics, they borrowed from them such as they judged most suitable to the Roman constitution. These laws, after being exposed for a certain time in the forum, and submitted to the judgment of the peo-

* The Papirian or Papisian code of civil law.

ple, who it does not appear made any alteration in them, were engraven on ten tables of brass, to which two others were added a short time afterward. These Twelve Tables became the basis of the Roman jurisprudence. Livy remarks, that in his time, amid the infinite number of additional laws, these continued to possess the greatest authority. And Cicero, speaking of the Twelve Tables, gives them the highest encomium, affirming that they throw great light on the manners and customs of ancient times, and contain more wisdom than the libraries of all the philosophers.* It was, he tells us, a common practice for the youth to commit these laws to memory.

* Plurima, inquit Crassus, est in XII. Tabulis antiquitatis effigies; quod et verborum prisca vetustas cognoscitur, et actionum genera quædam majorum consuetudinem vitamque declarant. Sive quis civilem scientiam contempletur, quam Scævola non putat oratoris esse propriam, sed cujusdam ex alio genere prudentiæ, totam hanc descriptis omnibus civitatis utilitatibus, ac partibus, XII. Tabulis contineri videbitis: sive quem ista præpotens et gloriosa philosophia delectat (dicam audacius,) hosce habet fontes omnium disputationum suarum, qui jure civili et legibus continentur.—Fremant licet omnes, dicam quod sentio: Bibliothecas, mehercule, omnium philosophorum unus mihi videtur XII. Tabularum libellus, si quis legum fontes, et capita viderit, et auctoritatis pondere, et utilitatis ubertate superare.—*Cicero de Oratore*, lib. i.

"In the XII. Tables, we have a picture of ancient times; inasmuch as the language of antiquity is learned from them, and the peculiar processes which they prescribe make known to us the manners and customs of our forefathers. If any one would study the science of the civil law, (which, by the way, Sævola does not consider proper for an orator, but for those of a different genius,) he will find everything that is essential, pertaining to the rights and privileges of citizens, in the XII. Tables. Or whoever is smitten with the love of this most excellent and glorious study, I most positively aver, that he possesses, in these, the fountains of all those disquisitions which are contained either in the civil or any other law. Whoever may murmur, I speak what I think—and, so help me Hercules, it does appear to me, if we would trace the laws to their fountain head, that the single little book of the XII. Tables, both for weight of authority and its exceeding usefulness, is of more value than the libraries of all the philosophers."

The laws of the Twelve Tables were classed in the following order. The *first* table enacted the form of judicial proceedings before the several tribunals. In the *second* were classed the laws regarding theft, breach of trust, and robbery. The *third* treated of debtors and creditors; the *fourth* of the *patria potestas*, or powers which a father had over his children; the *fifth* of inheritances and guardianships; the *sixth* contained the laws regarding property and possession; the *seventh* related to the punishment of different crimes and delicts; the *eighth* contained regulations regarding land estates, public roads, boundaries, and plantations; the *ninth* related to the privileges of the people, or the rights of Roman citizens; the *tenth* contained the regulation of funerals; the *eleventh* treated of religion and the worship of the gods; and the *twelfth* enacted regulations regarding marriage and the rights of husbands and wives.*

This digest of jurisprudence gave, on the whole, great satisfaction to all ranks of men; but among the statutes of the last table was one law most impolitic in the present situation of affairs, and which produced accordingly all that rancour and animosity between the orders which might have been expected. This was a law prohibiting all intermarriage between the patricians and the people—a law which the inferior order could not help regarding as a mark of infamy and scorn. It was naturally felt as such, and the popular magistrates were not remiss in cherishing and exaggerating that impression on the minds of the people. It gave rise to a keen and animated debate in the comitia, which Livy has minutely detailed in the fourth book of his history. The speech of the tribune Canuleius on that occasion, though doubtless owing its principal merit to the talents of the his-

* A brief analysis of the laws of the Twelve Tables, and a very perspicuous commentary on their import, is to be found in Rosini, Antiq. Rom., Dempsteri, lib. viii.

torian, is a noble specimen of eloquence, and of that judicious intermixture of argument and irony which is peculiarly suited to a popular assembly. The law itself, though carried at the time, and engrossed among those of the Twelve Tables, was not of long duration. It was, in fact, the very first to which the people, in their daily advancing progress to an equality of rights with the higher order, prevailed to have abrogated.

Thus we observe the Roman jurisprudence confined at first within very narrow bounds; a circumstance which necessarily gave great latitude to judges in the power of interpreting the statutes; and the inapplicability of these to the endless variety of cases must, of course, have greatly fomented the spirit of litigation. One admirable law, however, to be found in those tables, was the best antidote that could be devised for this enormous evil. This was an enactment, that all causes should be heard and determined in one day, between sunrise and sunset. This was a powerful restraint on every species of judicial chicanery, and operated as the best remedy against that delay, the worst of grievances, which often makes injustice itself more tolerable than the means of obtaining its redress.

From the laws of the Twelve Tables, the *Jurisconsulti*, the lawyers, composed a system of forms and rules, by which the processes in the courts were conducted. The number of the laws was likewise increased from time to time by the *Plebiscita** and *Senatus consulta*;† the former made by the people, without the authority of the senate, in the *Comitia tributa*; the latter enacted by the sole authority of the senate. To these we may add the laws framed by the authority of the *prætors*, after the institution of that magistracy, which was near a century poste-

* Laws made by the people without the consent of the senate.

† Decrees of the senate.

rior to the creation of the decemvirs. But of those different materials which composed the body of the Roman law, it is not necessary here to treat with greater amplitude.

The *decemviri*, like most men new in office, conducted themselves at first with much wisdom and moderation: each of them by turns presided as chief magistrate of the state, during a single day, having the fasces carried before him in token of sovereign power. The nine others had no other distinguishing symbol than a single officer who preceded them, called *Accensus*, (usher or mace-bearer.) The presiding magistrate assembled the senate, took their advice, and carried into execution the result of their joint determination in the ordinary business of the commonwealth, but the whole decemviri applied with equal diligence to the administration of justice. They met every morning in the forum, to give audience to all complaints and processes. They seemed to be animated solely by the desire of maintaining public order; nor was there any symptoms of jealousy or party-spirit. Even Appius Claudius, whom his colleagues seem to have regarded as the first in rank, affected no superiority. His conduct acquired him high popularity; and while he rendered impartial justice to those of every rank and station, he behaved with gentleness and courtesy to the meanest citizen. We shall presently see the purpose of this ambitious man.

The term of administration of the new magistrates had almost expired, when it was found necessary to make a supplement to the laws, of two additional tables. For that ostensible purpose, but more probably from the desire of staving off the election of tribunes, the senate decreed that there should be a new appointment of decemviri. The people, who were equally pleased to be relieved from the consular government, as the patricians from the tribunate, approved of the measure. Several senators aspired to the new

office; while the artful Appius, with a show of modesty, affected to decline it. He was, therefore, chosen to preside at the election of the new decemviri, and thus entitled to give the first suffrage. To the surprise of all, he named himself, and suggested six others of the patrician order, and three of the plebeian. Such was the popularity he had acquired, and such the satisfaction of the people, in being admitted to a share in this important and honourable office, that his nomination was received with loud applauses, and immediately agreed to; however displeasing we may presume it was to those of the higher order, who either envied the power, or penetrated into the ambitious designs, of this artful man.

The colleagues whom Appius had named for himself were all men devoted to his interest, and, therefore, they followed a uniform system of measures. Resolved to retain their office for life, they determined no more to assemble either the senate or the *comitia*, but, in virtue of the plenary powers annexed to their office, to cut off all appeal; to support jointly the separate measures and decrees of each; and thus to perpetuate in their own persons a sovereign, absolute, and uncontrolled authority. This bold purpose, or at least the measures adopted for its accomplishment, it seems extremely difficult to reconcile to common prudence. All approaches to tyranny, if planned by wisdom, are gradual; and it is nothing less than madness in a magistrate to proclaim a purpose of tyrannizing upon his first entering upon office.

But, whatever we may judge of the designs of these decemvirs, it is certain that they endeavoured to maintain their authority by extreme violence, and as certain that they became almost immediately the objects of public indignation. From their first appearance in the forum, they were preceded by twelve lictors, who constantly carried the fasces armed with axes. Their suite was commonly composed of a number of the most licentious patricians; profligates

loaded with debt or stained with crimes; men whose pleasure lay in every species of disorder, and who contributed a desperate aid to those ministers whose power protected them in their lawless excesses.

Such was the miserable situation of Rome under her new governors, that many of the principal citizens betook themselves for refuge to the allied states. It was no wonder that the Æqui and Volsci, those perpetual enemies of the Romans, should judge this a favourable season for an attack upon the territory of the republic. In this emergency, the decemviri became sensible of their want of that substantial power which is founded on popularity; they were obliged to convoke the senate, and thus acknowledge the necessity of a decree of that body before a single citizen would enter the polls. By the senate's decree, three bodies of troops were raised; two marched against the enemy, and with them eight of the decemvirs. Appius and one of his colleagues retained the other body in Rome, for the defence of the city and the support of their own authority, which an outrage of the most flagrant nature was now very speedily to bring to its termination.

Appius, sitting in judgment in his tribunal, had cast his eyes upon a young woman of uncommon beauty, who daily passed through the forum, in her way to the public schools. Virginia, a maiden of fifteen years of age, was the daughter of a plebeian, a centurion, at that time absent with the army. Appius had been informed of her situation: she was betrothed to Icilius, formerly one of the tribunes, then serving against the enemy; and their marriage was to be celebrated as soon as the campaign was at an end; an obstacle which served only to increase the passion of this flagitious magistrate, who determined at all hazards to secure her as his prey. After many fruitless attempts to corrupt the fidelity of those domestics to whom Virginius had left the charge of his daughter, (for she had lost her mother,) Appius devised a scheme which

he thought could not fail to put Virginia entirely within his power. He employed Marcus Claudius, one of his dependants, an infamous and shameless man, to claim the young woman as his own property. Marcus pretended that she was the daughter of one of his female slaves, who had sold her when an infant to the wife of Virginius, who had no children. He therefore pretended to reclaim what was his own, and attempted by force to carry her home to his house. The people interposed with great earnestness to protect the young woman; and Marcus, declaring that he meant nothing but what was just and lawful, brought his claim before the tribunal of the decemvir. Numitorius, the uncle of Virginia, represented that her father, the guardian and protector of his child, was at this time absent, and in arms for the defence of his country. He asked a delay only of two days, in order to send for him from the camp, and demanded, in the meantime, that, as her nearest relation, the damsel should be committed to his care. The decemvir, with the show of much candour, allowed that there was great equity in the request of sending for Virginius, which he therefore immediately granted, but urged at the same time that this delay ought not to be prejudicial to the right of a master who claimed his slave. He therefore decreed that Marcus should take the young woman to his house, on giving security to produce her upon the return of her father. The flagrant injustice of this decree excited a cry of universal indignation. Marcus, advancing to lay hold of Virginia, was repulsed by the people, and particularly by Icilius, her intended husband, who being apprized of the affair, had flown in rage and distraction to the forum. The tumult became so violent that Appius, alarmed for his own safety, thought proper to suspend the execution of his decree, and to allow the young woman to remain under the protection of her friends till the arrival of her father. He despatched, in the meantime, a messenger to the army, desiring that his colleagues

would on no account permit Virginius to quit the camp. But this unfortunate man, whom his friends had found means to inform of the situation of his child, was already on his way. He got to Rome without hinderance, and to the confusion of the decemvir, appeared next day in the forum, supporting in his arms his daughter drowned in tears. An immense crowd attended; and all awaited the issue of this interesting question, their breasts alternately agitated with fear, with compassion, and indignation.

Appius, determined to prosecute his purpose, had ordered the troops to surround the forum. He now called on Marcus to make his demand, and to produce the proofs of his claim. To these Virginius was at no loss to give the most satisfying answers, which fully exposed the villany of the imposture. Appius was not to be thus foiled. With the most unparalleled effrontery he stood forth as a witness as well as a judge; declaring that it was consistent with his own knowledge that the plea of Marcus was true. He therefore gave his final sentence, that the slave should be delivered up to her lawful master, and ordered his officers to enforce without delay, the execution of his decree. The soldiers were removing the crowd, and Marcus together with the lictors, was advancing to seize Virginia, who clung for protection around the neck of her father. "There is," said he, "but one way my dear child, to save thy honour and preserve thy liberty." Then seizing a knife from the stall of a butcher—"Thus," said he, striking her to the heart, "thus, I send thee to thy forefathers unpolluted and a free woman." Then turning to the tribunal of Appius, "Thou monster!" cried he, "with this blood I devote thy head to the infernal gods!" Appius, in a transport of rage, called out to the lictors to seize Virginius; but he rushing out from the forum, and making way for himself with the knife which he held in his hand, while the multitude favoured his escape, got safe without the city, and arrived in a few hours at the

camp. Meantime Numitorius and Icilius exposed the bleeding body to the sight of the whole people, who inflamed to the highest pitch of fury, would have torn Appius to pieces, had he not found means to escape amidst the tumult, and to conceal himself in the house of one of his friends.

Valerius and Horatius, two of the senators, men of consular dignity, and who had opposed the last creation of decemviri, now put themselves at the head of the people. They promised them the redress of all their wrongs, and the abolition of those hated magistrates; but urged that they should first wait the resolution of the army, which could not fail to coincide with their own.

The unfortunate Virginius had no sooner acquainted his fellow-soldiers of what had happened, than there was a general insurrection. Without regard to the orders of the decemvirs in the camp, the whole army, headed by their centurions, marched to Rome, and, retiring to the Aventine mount, chose ten leaders with the title of military tribunes. They then declared their determined purpose of abolishing the decemvirate, and re-establishing the consular government, together with the tribunes of the people. The senate was assembled. The decemvirs thought proper voluntarily to resign their office. Valerius and Horatius were chosen consuls; and the popular magistrates, the tribunes, were elected with the same powers as formerly, which reinstated the people at once in all their rights and privileges.

Among the tribunes first chosen were Virginius, Icilius, and Numitorius. It may be believed that their vengeance against the infamous Appius was not long delayed. Virginius cited him before the people, at whose orders he was seized and thrown into prison, where, a few days after, he was found dead. It was suspected (says Dionysius) that he was privately strangled by order of the tribunes; but others, with more probability, affirm that he chose to escape a

certain and ignominious fate by a voluntary death. His colleague Oppius, the chief abettor of his crimes, had the same catastrophe, and the rest underwent a voluntary banishment, while their goods were forfeited to the public use. Such is the history of the decemvirate, that inauspicious and short lived magistracy, which was thus violently terminated in the third year after its institution.*

CHAPTER VI.

Law against intermarriage of Patricians and Plebeians repealed—Military Tribunes created—Creation of Censors—their high powers of office—A regular pay assigned to the Army introduces a new balance into the Constitution—Consequences of—Siege of Veii—Romans begin to extend their conquests—Reflections on the state of the Republic at this period—War with the Gauls—Its fabulous aspect—New popular Laws—Institution of the office of Prætor—of Quæstor—of Ædile—Licinian law, limiting property in land.

No sooner was tranquillity in some measure re-established in the city of Rome, than the consuls Valerius and Horatius, at the head of a large army, animated

* An amusing comparison may be made of the talents of the two great historians of the Roman republic, Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in the accounts they have given of that celebrated event, the death of Virginia by the hand of her father, and its important consequences. In Livy, we have a concise, clear, and animated narrative, where no circumstance is superfluous, no observation strained or far-fetched, nor any thing omitted which contributes to the effect of the picture. In Dionysius, we wade through a minute detail of facts, and a laborious legal discussion, resembling the report of a law-process, in which every argument is brought forward, and every reflection anticipated, that the mind can form upon the case. It is easy to judge which method of writing is best adapted to historical composition. *Vide Liv.* lib. iii. c. 31—59; *and Dion. Hal., Ant. Rom.*, lib. xi.

with the spirit of patriotism which the late events had strongly stimulated, marched against the enemy. The Volsci and Æqui sustained a complete defeat; but the senate, jealous, as is said, of the too great popularity of the successful generals, thought proper to refuse them the honours of a triumph. The consuls, indignant at this insult, applied to the people, who unanimously decreed them this reward of their services. Thus the senate most imprudently threw away its privileges; and every day gave some new accession of weight to the scale of the people.

Two powerful barriers which at this time subsisted between the patricians and people were, the law which prevented the intermarriage of these orders, and another ordinance which excluded the people from the consulate and higher offices of the state. It was only necessary to remove these two obstructions, to bring the separate ranks to a perfect equality in every substantial privilege of Roman citizens; and the people were determined to leave no means untried for the accomplishment of this end.

On the occasion of a new war, the ordinary device was practised of refusing to enter the rolls. In this purpose the people were obstinate; and the tribunes proposed, as the only expedient to bring them to compliance, that the law against intermarriage should be repealed; a measure which, they urged, would be equally advantageous for both parties, as it would tend to a union of their interests, and put an end to those perpetual jealousies and contentions which were so ruinous to the republic.

There were three different modes by which marriage could be contracted among the Romans. The marriages of the patricians were celebrated in the presence of ten witnesses, and with a variety of religious ceremonies peculiar to their order. The people married after two different forms: the one was by a species of sale, *emptio venditio* (by buying and selling); and the other by the simple cohabitation of the parties for a year,

which by law constituted a marriage. Religion, therefore, made a barrier between the patricians and people in this article; and this necessarily constituted the principal objection against the repeal of the law. The senate, however, saw the necessity of some concessions; and they judged that, by granting this request, they would put a stop to any further claims, at least for the present. But they were mistaken. The spirit of encroachment is never allayed by concession. This law was no sooner repealed than the people, with the same obstinacy, refused to enrol themselves till a second law was passed, admitting them to the capacity of holding all the offices of the republic.

No measure could be more galling than this to the pride of the patricians; but the necessity was extreme, as the enemy was at the gates of Rome. The senate sought a palliative to content both parties. It was determined to suspend for a time the office of the consuls, and to create in their place six military tribunes, with a similar extent of power, three of whom should be patricians and three plebeians. This proposal was heartily embraced by the people, who, provided they were admitted to the chief dignity of the state, did not value under what title it was; and the senators, on the other hand, flattered themselves that, having preserved the consulship inviolate, they would soon be able to restore that magistracy. While they were thus soothing themselves with shadowy distinctions, it was very evident that they were daily losing substantial power.

It was customary for those who were candidates for any magistracy to appear in the *comitia*, clad in white apparel. The plebeians, who aspired to the military tribunate, appeared accordingly in that dress; but as the votes were called by centuries, and the patricians had been at some pains to influence their dependants, it happened that not one of the people was elected. Three months afterward, the military tribunes, as had been preconcerted, resigned their office

on pretence of some irregularity in their election. A powerful canvass was now set on foot by the plebeians to make good their pretensions to the new magistracy; but differing in their choice of candidates, and finding it impossible to arrive at a unanimity of sentiment, they consented, rather than yield to each other that the consulate should, in the meantime, be restored; and these jealousies being artfully kept alive by the patricians, it thus happened that there was no election of military tribunes for several years.

War and domestic dissensions had prevented the consuls from making the usual census or numeration of the people, for a great many years; so that much confusion had arisen in the levying of the taxes, from ignorance of the exact number of the citizens, and the proportion of burdens to be levied from individuals. To remedy this evil, the consuls being now usually too much occupied to make the census regularly every five years, the senate created two new magistrates under the title of *censors;* an office which became afterward of the highest respectability, and was given only to persons of consular dignity.

The most important privilege of the censors, and which, in fact, rendered their authority formidable to all ranks in the state, was the right they possessed of inspecting the morals, and examining into the conduct of all the citizens. It was in virtue of this high prerogative that, as Livy remarks, they kept in dependance both the senate and people. They possessed a constitutional power of degrading such as had manifested any irregularity of conduct, and depriving them of the rank and office which they held in the state It was not an authority which extended to the punishment of those ordinary crimes and delicts which fall under the penal laws of a state. But there are offences which, in point of example, are worse than crimes, and more pernicious in their consequences. It is not the breach of express laws that can ever be of general bad effect, or tend to the destruction of a gov-

ernment; but it is that silent and unpunishable corruption of manners, which, undermining private and public virtue, weakens and destroys those springs to which the best-ordered constitution owes its support. The counteracting this latent principle of decay was the most useful part of the office of the censors. If any citizen had imprudently contracted large debts; if he had consumed his fortune in extravagance, or in living beyond his income; if he had been negligent in the cultivation of his lands; nay, if, being in good circumstances and able to maintain a family, he had declined, without just cause, to marry—all these offences attracted the notice of the censors, who had various modes of inflicting a penalty. The most usual, and not the least impressive, was a public denunciation of the offender as an object of disapprobation—*ignominia notabant.* It did not amount to a mark of infamy; but punished solely by inflicting the shame of a public reprimand. A penalty, however, of this kind is not fitted to operate on all dispositions, and accordingly the censors had it in their power to employ means more generally effectual. They could degrade a senator from his dignity and strike his name out of the roll. They could deprive a knight of his rank, by taking from him the horse which was maintained for him at the public expense, and was the essential mark of his station. A citizen might be punished by degrading him from his tribe to an inferior one, or doubling his proportion of the public taxes. These, being arbitrary powers, might have been greatly abused; but on the other hand, it is to be observed, that no decree of the censors was unalterable: it might be suspended, or altogether taken off by a sentence of the ordinary judges, or by a decree of the censors of the succeeding *Lustrum.* Cicero tells us, that Caius Geta, who had been degraded from his rank of senator by the censors, was reinstated in his dignity by their successors, and even made a censor himself; and Livy relates a similar instance of Valerius Messala.

The censorship, from these extensive powers, was accounted the most honourable office of the commonwealth. From the time of the second Punic war, the censors were always chosen from such persons as had held the consulship. After the termination of the republican government, the censorship was exercised by the emperors, and justly regarded as one of the most honourable and important branches of the imperial function.

The dissensions between the orders still continued, with a little variety either in the grievances complained of on the part of the people, or in the modes of obtaining or rather compelling a redress of them. The last resource of the people, and which they generally found effectual, was, on the emergency of a war, to refuse to enter the rolls until the senate granted their demands. The latter body now bethought itself of an expedient which it is rather surprising they had not sooner adopted: this was to purchase the service of the army by giving a regular pay to the troops. Hitherto, in all the military enterprises, the citizens enrolled served upon their own charges. It was a tax incumbent on every Roman to support himself during war, which being alike a burden on every free citizen, was not regarded as a grievance, but as the reasonable price which he paid for his liberty and security. Yet this circumstance necessarily limited the duration of their warlike operations to a very short period; for when the army was embodied the lands of the poorer citizens, who have no slaves, were entirely neglected. This policy, therefore, was not only ruinous to the people, but repressed all enlargement of the Roman territory, and was an insuperable bar to extensive and permanent conquests.

The senate now resolved to adopt a new system. They ordained that, in future, the foot soldiers should have a regular pay from the public treasury, to defray which burden a tax should be imposed on all the members of the commonwealth in proportion to their

means. The people, who did not penetrate the motive of this important measure, but looked only to the immediate advantage it promised in relieving them from what they had always felt a very heavy burden, were fully satisfied with the new arrangement. The tribunes, however, either looking further into consequences, or perhaps jealous of any measure which, promising an harmonious agreement between the orders, diminished their own consequence as magistrates, were at much pains to persuade the people that the bounty of the patricians was always to be suspected, and sought by every means to frustrate the new project. They failed, however, of their purpose. The manifest advantage of the measure prevailed over all opposition. The patricians set the example and began the contribution, fairly paying their contingents according to the value of their estates. The money was seen passing to the treasury in loaded wagons, and the poorer citizens, pleased with the sight, paid their shares with the utmost alacrity, anticipating the return of their money with high profit into their own pockets.*

From this period we shall see the Roman system of war assume a new appearance. The senate henceforward always found soldiers at command: the state was consequently enabled to engage in extensive enterprises, and support long campaigns: every success was more signal and important, because it was maintained and prosecuted; and every conquest was turned to permanent advantage. A most material consequence likewise arose to the constitution of the republic; the senate, by command over the troops, obtained a favourable balance to its otherwise decreasing authority.

* We are not informed by any of the ancient writers what pay was allotted to the Roman soldiers at this period; but in the time of Polybius, that is, at the era of the second Punic war, each foot soldier was allowed two *oboli* a day—a centurion double that pay.

One of the first measures which owed its success to this change in the Roman art of war was the siege of Veii, a city at that time equal in extent and population to Rome, and a formidable rival to her power and ascendancy among the states of Italy. A formal siege was a new attempt to the Romans, who had hitherto limited their enterprises to small towns, which they could take by surprise or storm. In their ancient mode of attacking towns, their most refined manœuvre was the *corona*, the crown, which was performed by surrounding the place and attacking it at once on every quarter. A city capable of resisting this assault was deemed impregnable. The Romans, who were now in a capacity to form lengthened enterprises, were, from that circumstance, a great overmatch for any of the surrounding states, as well as from the improvement we must suppose the art of war underwent from its now becoming a profession instead of an occasional employment. The dominion of Rome had been hitherto confined to the territory of a few miles around the city: we shall now see how rapid was the extension of her bounds, and the strength acquired by her conquests.

The siege of Veii was prolonged for ten years. An army wintering on the field was a thing till then quite unexampled; and during the whole time of this siege, the tribunes, who suffered no occasion to pass unimproved that promised to excite discord and domestic faction, loudly complained that this intolerable war was nothing else than a conspiracy against liberty; a design to weaken the party of the people, by depriving them of the suffrages of those who were with the army, while the latter, as they hinted, were to be inhumanly sacrificed in order to give the patricians the entire command of the commonwealth. Having full conviction of these designs, the patriotic tribunes felt it their duty to oppose the levying the tax for furnishing the military pay. The army of course soon began to mutiny; and the consequence

must have been the abandonment and defeat of the enterprise, had not the patricians found means to sooth them by electing one of their number to the military tribunate. This well-timed sacrifice of a little power taken from the scale of the higher order, quieted the spirit of the opposition, and the campaign was not frustrated of its supplies.

The siege of Veii proceeded, as we have said, very slowly; and during its continuance, Rome was afflicted both by real and by imaginary calamities. A dreadful pestilence broke out; and the books of the Sibyls were consulted, which declared that the only remedy was a *Lectisternium*,* a ceremony now performed for the first time. An invitation was given to the chief gods of the Roman state, to partake of a splendid festival prepared for them with uncommon expense. The statues of Jupiter, Apollo, Latona, Diana, Hercules, Mercury, and Neptune, were laid upon three magnificent beds, and for eight days the most sumptuous banquets were presented to these images, which of course were eaten by their priests and partly distributed to the populace. During that time, the gates of the city were open to all strangers; the courts of law were shut, and all litigation suspended; the prisoners were set at liberty, and every citizen kept open tables for all comers. Although, perhaps, this ceremony might owe its origin to superstition alone, it is not impossible that it might actually have been attended with salutary effects. It is well known that in epidemic and contagious diseases, nothing so much predisposes to infection as fear and apprehension. A jubilee of this kind, by exhilarating the spirits of the people, and banishing for a while care and anxiety, might naturally contribute to check the diffusion, and abate the violence of the contagion.

Veii was still blockaded; and as this enterprise greatly engrossed the minds of the public, everything

* A funeral banquet to the gods.

in that age of superstition was construed into a good or a bad omen. The lake of Alba increased prodigiously, and deputies were sent to inquire what the gods meant by that extraordinary phenomenon. The deputies brought back word that the conquest of Veii depended on draining the lake, and that particular care should be taken to convey the waters to the sea; (a most wise and salutary advice, in a season of contagious disease.) The work was immediately begun; and that fine canal was cut, which subsists at this day, and conveys the waters of the lake Albano, by *Castel-Gondolfo*, to the sea. This was likewise an instance in which the faith of the people in the veracity of a prediction might have greatly aided its accomplishment. In the present case, however, it is probable that the valour of the beseiged Veientes had powerful incitements, and perhaps from a similar improvement of popular prejudices to wise purposes; for Veii continued for a long period of time to baffle every effort of the Roman power. At length, in the tenth year of the siege, Marcus Furius Camillus was chosen dictator, an intrepid and skilful general, who had the honour of finishing this obstinate war, by the taking of the city in the 358th year of Rome, and 391 B. C.

The Romans had but very few laws of a political nature, or such as regulated the form of their governments, or defined the constitutional powers and rights of the distinct orders of the state. It is, therefore, no matter of surprise, to find that perpetual contest betwixt those orders, giving rise to all that series of petty revolutions, which form almost entirely the history of the Roman republic, for the period of above four centuries. During the regal government, the people had, in reality, more genuine liberty, than for some time after its abolition, while the constitution was almost purely aristocratical; for the kings, though they sought to humble the aspiring patricians, were extremely moderate toward the people, who were

thus brought very near to a level with the superior order. But under the aristocracy which followed the expulsion of the king, the patricians, who were the governors of the state, made it their principal object to increase and confirm their power, by reducing the people to absolute submission and dependance. Hence, those oppressive measures, which at length produced that stubborn opposition and resistance on the part of the people, which nothing could allay but the concession of creating magistrates from their own order, and giving them a constitutional weight and legal influence in the state. This important step being once surmounted, every subsequent struggle of parties added fresh weight to the popular scale; and there were now two separate bodies in the republic, each eagerly contending for its sovereignty, and studious of every method of humbling and abasing the other.

It cannot be said that the Romans were at this time a free people, for neither of the orders was really so. The patricians were not free, for they were amenable to the popular assemblies; a court where the judges were their jealous rivals and natural enemies. Nor could the plebeians be said to enjoy liberty, for they neither enjoyed the security of property nor of person, from the extreme rigor of the laws regarding debtors, in which situation the great mass of the people stood with respect to the richer citizens. Even in the popular assemblies, when the *comitia* were called in the order of the centuries, the people met only to witness the enactment of laws which commonly struck against their own liberties; not to mention the right of the senate at any time to nominate a dictator who had absolute authority in the state.

The people, however, under all these disadvantages, were, as we have seen, advancing, step by step, to an equality with the patricians in the enjoyment of all the offices of the commonwealth, which they now very soon obtained. It is easy to discern that this single circumstance—the election of the chief magistrates

in the comitia held by centuries—formed now the only obstacle to an equality of power between the orders. It may, perhaps, be supposed, that at this period of the commonwealth, when many of the people had acquired considerable wealth, and consequently came to be arranged in the first or higher classes, the number of these rich plebeians would frequently turn the balance, even in the *comitia centuriata*, in favour of their own order. And so, in fact, it did sometimes happen; but this was not usual; for as the censor had the power of arrangement, they commonly took care that the first classes, though composed in part of wealthy plebeians, should have in them, at least, a considerable majority of patricians, which secured the vote of the whole class.

In order to overcome this manifest disadvantage to their order, the popular magistrates might have followed either of the two different plans: the one, the most difficult of accomplishment, was the procuring the election of the higher magistrates to be made in the *comitia tributa;* the other, in case they failed in that attempt, was to bring about the same order of voting in the *comitia centuriata*, or to make the lot determine which class should take the lead in giving their suffrage. And it has been supposed that they did effect something of this nature; for Livy speaks of the *prerogative class* in the election of the higher magistrates, which was the term used to signify that class in the *comitia tributa* on which the lot fell to vote first. Livy, however, in this expression, might mean nothing more than to signify that class which, in point of *rank*, was entitled to vote first; so that no conclusive argument can be founded on this indefinite expression he has used.

The siege and conquest of Veii were a presage of the future grandeur of the Roman state. It was impossible for the small, detached, and independent states of Italy to withstand a nation always in arms, whose high ambition and unremitting perseverance were

equal to the projecting and accomplishing of any enterprise in the way of conquest. It might naturally be supposed, that those smaller states, aware of the great advantage which Rome had gained by her system of professionary soldiers, would either imitate her in adopting the same plan, or at least take precaution, by an extensive system of offensive and defensive alliance between themselves, to guard against this formidable and encroaching power; but it does not appear that either of these measures was adopted; and the consequence was, that signal inferiority which was the cause of their progressive, and at length total subjugation to the Roman arms.

The conquest of Veii was succeeded by a war with the Gauls. This formidable people—alone a cause of serious alarm to the Roman power—was a branch of the great ancient nation of the *Celtæ*.* They are said to have first entered Italy in the reign of Tarquinius Priscus. They opened to themselves a passage through the Alps, made four different irruptions, and settled themselves in the northern part of the peninsula, between the Alps and Appenines, from which they had expelled the Etruscans, and built for themselves several cities. They had been settled in this country above two hundred years, when, under the command of Brennus, (A. U. C. 362,) they laid siege to Clusium. The Etruscans solicited the aid of the Romans, who sent some deputies in order to mediate a reconciliation; but these deputies, being provoked by the pride of the barbarians, joined themselves to the Etrurian army, and made an attack on the Gauls; a breach of the

* The more ancient Greek writers bestow the name of *Celtæ* indifferently on the Gauls and Germans. Others confine that appellation to the natives of Gaul proper; while some authors include under it the Spaniards, countenanced in that notion by the term *Celtiberians*. The name Celtæ, however, in the Roman writers, seems to be applied exclusively to the inhabitants of Gallia, or that country of which Cæsar, in the beginning of his Commentaries, has accurately described the limits.

law of nations, for which Brennus immediately sent to Rome to demand satisfaction. The Romans were not inclined to grant it; but imprudently justified, and even conferred honour on, the offending delegates: the consequence was, that Brennus, raising the siege of Clusium, marched directly to Rome.

There is nothing which tends more to encourage doubts regarding the authenticity of the Roman history at this period, than the circumstances which their writers have recorded of this war with the Gauls. Three years before its commencement, the Roman citizens capable of bearing arms amounted, according to the numeration of the censors, to above one hundred and fifty thousand men. After the first engagement with the Gauls, in which a Roman army amounting to forty thousand was defeated, we find Rome so absolutely defenceless, that the barbarians enter the city without opposition, and massacre the senators in cold blood, who are sitting patiently waiting for death at the doors of their houses. The Gauls then set fire to the city, which they burn to the ground. About a thousand inhabitants shut themselves up in the capitol, which still holds out against the enemy; but this fortress would have been surprised and taken by assault in the night, had not some geese, more wakeful than the sentinels, alarmed the garrison by their screaming, and thus defeated the enemy's escalade. The garrison, however, is soon reduced to extremity from want of provisions, and a capitulation ensues, by which the Romans agree to purchase a peace for a certain price in solid gold, which the Gauls are weighing out with false weights, when Camillus, with a large army, (how assembled we are left to guess,) most seasonably comes to the relief of his country, and engaging the enemy, obtains so complete a victory, that in one day's time there is not a single Gaul remaining within the territory of Rome. Is it not surprising that the sagacious Livy should gravely relate, as a piece of authentic history, such facts as are utterly irreconcileable to common probability?

The destruction of Rome by the Gauls is said to have given rise to a scheme which was eagerly promoted by the tribunes of the people, the removal of the seat of government to Veii. Camillus opposed the measure in an animated oration, which is recorded, or rather composed, by Livy.* But the orator's eloquence would probably have failed of its effect, had not popular superstition contributed to aid his counsels. A centurion, mustering his men in the forum, called out to one of the standard-bearers, "Here fix your banners; here we shall do best to remain."† The omen was received by a general acclamation of the people, and all design of abandoning the city was instantly laid aside.

Rome, desolated and burnt to the ground, seems very speedily to have recovered from her misfortunes; for we find, in a very few years, a renewal of the same intestine disorders, the same jealousies and obstinate contention for power between the patricians and the people, which in fact for about two centuries form all that is interesting in the history of the Roman commonwealth.

It is somewhat extraordinary that most of the revolutions of the Roman state should have owed their origin to women. To a woman, Rome owed the abolition of the regal dignity and the establishment of the republic. To a woman, she owed her delivery from the tyranny of the decemviri, and the restoration of the consular government; and to a woman, we shall now see, she owed that change of the constitution by which the people became capable of holding the highest offices of the commonwealth. Marcus Fabius Ambustus had given one of his daughters in marriage to Licinius Stolo, a plebeian, and the other to Servius Sulpitius, a patrician, and at that time one of the military tribunes. One day, when the wife of the plebeian was at her sister's house, the lictor who

* Liv. v. 51, &c.

† Signifer, statue signum:—hic manebimus optime. *Liv.* v. 55.

walked before Sulpitius, on his return from the senate, knocked loudly at the door with the staff of the fasces, to give notice that the magistrate was coming in. This noise, to which the wife of Licinius was not accustomed, threw her into a panic. Her sister laughed at her alarm, and threw out a malicious jest on the inequality of their conditions. A very small matter, says Livy, is sufficient to disturb the quiet of a woman's mind. The younger Fabia took this affront most seriously to heart. She complained to her father, who, to comfort her, promised that he would do his utmost endeavour that her husband should have his lictor as well as her elder sister's. This trifling circumstance is said to have been the cause of the admission of the plebeian order to the consular dignity.

Fabius concerted his plan with his son-in-law Licinius, and with Lucius Sextius, a young, enterprising plebeian. At the next election for the tribunes of the people, Licinius and Sextius had interest to be nominated to that office. One of their first measures was the proposal of three new laws. The first was in favour of debtors, and enacted that there should be an abatement of the principal sums due in proportion to the interest that had been paid on them. The second enacted that no Roman citizen should possess more than five hundred acres of land: and by the third it was proposed to be decreed that the military tribunate should henceforward be abolished, and two consuls elected, the one from the order of the patricians, the other from that of the people.

The patricians, it may be believed, gave the strongest opposition to all these laws. They secured to their interest the colleagues of Sextius and Licinius, and by their *veto* the propositions were thrown out. Sextius, however, was not discouraged, but boldly threatened that he would make the higher order sensible of the power of his *veto* in return. He and his colleague Licinius had the address to be continued in

office for five successive years, during all which time they obstinately opposed the election both of military tribunes and of consuls; so that in that period there were no other magistrates than the tribunes of the people and the ædiles.

Amid these disorders, a war broke out with the inhabitants of Veiitræ, and soon after with the Gauls. The senate had no other resource but to create a dictator; but that office, from being too frequent, had lost much of its respect and its terrors. Camillus, at the age of eighty, was, for the fifth time, appointed dictator: he was successful in defeating the enemy, but he could not repress the ambitious schemes of the tribunes. These magistrates at length, by inflexible perseverance, carried their point. They obtained a decree of the people that the military tribunal should be abolished, and that henceforth one of the consuls should be chosen from the order of the plebeians; and this important decree the senate was forced to confirm. Camillus proposed that there should be a new magistrate created from the patrician order, for the administration of justice; as the consuls, in their function of generals of the republic, had too much occupation to attend to their judicial duties. The people, extremely gratified by the great accession of power and privilege to their order, consented cheerfully to the proposal; and a new magistrate was created with the title of *Prætor*, an officer often mentioned in the Roman laws, and of very high dignity. He was decorated with the robe called the *prætexta*, bordered with purple; he had the *curule*, or ivory chair of state, and he was attended by a guard of six lictors. As the prætorship was formed by conferring on a separate magistrate what had formerly been a branch of the consular office, the patricians, who got this new office annexed to their order, had thus a sort of compensation for the important concession they had made to the people. At first only one magistrate was created with the title of prætor; but afterward the

vast increase of civil causes occasioned the creation of many. In the time of Sylla there were *eight* prætors. Julius Cæsar increased the number to ten, and afterward to sixteen; and the second triumvirate created no less than sixty-four prætors. After that time, we meet sometimes with twelve, and sometimes with sixteen or eighteen prætors; but in the decline of the empire we commonly find no more than three. When the number of the prætors was thus increased, and the *quæstiones* or trials for crimes were made perpetual, instead of being committed to officers chosen for the occasion, there was one prætor distinguished by the epithet of *urbanus*, who had the cognizance of civil suits, and the others were special judges in particular crimes or offences. The latter were therefore sometimes called *quæsitores, quia quærebant de crimine;** the function of the former was simply *jus dicere* or to judge in civil questions between the citizens. The era of the creation of this new magistracy, and of the admission of the plebeian order to the consulate, was the three hundred and eighty-sixth year from the foundation of Rome. Two new ædiles were at the same time created from the patrician order, with the epithet of *turules* or *majores;* and their office was to take care of the temples, and to preside at the public games and spectacles. The ambition of the principal plebeians was now satisfied, and the patricians had in return some small gratification by these new offices. It remained now only that the people should likewise be gratified, and this was done by the Licinian law, which enacted that no Roman citizen should possess above five hundred acres of land, and that the surplus should be distributed at a settled and low rate of price among the poorest of the people. We must conclude that the territory of the republic was at this time very

* Quæstors, or inquirers, because they made inquiry concerning criminal offences.

greatly enlarged, when such a regulation was either necessary or practicable.

It might have been expected that these new arrangements would have been attended, at least for some time, with public tranquillity; but this was a situation which the public magistrates could not endure, for the authority and credit of the tribunes kept pace with the public disorders. These magistrates were at infinite pains to convince the people that, by consenting to the creation of the new offices of prætor and ædile, they had lost more power than they had gained by the admission of their order to the consulate. They therefore urged that it would be mean and pusillanimous to stop short in their pretensions till they had obtained an equal right with the patricians to all the dignities of the state, sacerdotal as well as civil.

The dissensions were therefore renewed with the same ardour as ever. A pestilence gave for some time a miserable interval of tranquillity. The priests, to put a stop to this calamity, which threatened to depopulate the city, tried every expedient which policy or superstition could devise. A *Lectisternium* was celebrated, and scenic representations were for the first time introduced at Rome, borrowed, it is said, from Etruria. But all was to no purpose. The plague, however, is recorded to have yielded at last to the ceremony of driving a nail into the temple of Jupiter. This, a French writer* remarks, was curing one contagious disease by another yet more contagious; meaning, no doubt, that the encouragement of superstition is worse than the pestilence—a sentiment which is not happily applied to the case of a rude people, whose superstitious prejudices are the safeguard of their morals, and will be cherished by a wise legislator as an engine of good policy.

The war still continued: the Gauls were ever

* Condillac.

making new attempts, and almost constantly with bad success. It was found expedient, however, very frequently to resort to the creation of a dictator; and such was the ascendancy which the plebeians had now obtained, that even this supreme and despotic magistrate was sometimes chosen from their order. It might have been foreseen that the privilege of being elected to the consulate necessarily led to this—for it was the province of the *consuls* to name the *dictator*. The plebeians had by this time likewise obtained the curule ædileship; they had now nothing more to aspire to than the censorship, the prætorship, and the priesthood. The senate, with great weakness but at the same time with great obstinacy, were always ready to renew their attempts at every new election to exclude the people. They sometimes succeeded, but they always lost more by this opposition than they gained. They prevailed at one election that both consuls should be chosen from their order; but they could not prevent their rivals from fully indemnifying themselves by the election of a plebeian censor.

CHAPTER VII.

ROMAN HISTORY continued—War with the Samnites—Devotion of Decius—Disgrace of the Caudine Forks—Popular pretensions increase—the Plebeians admitted to the Priesthood—War with Pyrrhus, king of Epirus—His Defeat—Conquest of all Italy by the Romans—Incorporation of the conquered Nations—Manner in which the Rights of Citizenship were extended.

SOON after this time a war began with the people of Samnium; and it was this war which led the Romans to the conquest of all Italy. The Samnites inhabited a district to the south of the Roman territory, and separated from it by Latium. They had hitherto

had no hostile interference with the Romans, and there was even a treaty of alliance subsisting between them; but the Latins, Hernici, Æqui, and Volsci being now subdued, that is to say, so weakened that they were obliged either to become subjects or allies of the republic, the Romans now came to be the immediate neighbours of the Samnites, and of course their enemies. The city of Capua gave occasion to the war.

Capua was the principal city of Campania, one of the finest and most fertile countries of Italy. This city then was extremely opulent and luxurious. The Samnites, a poor but warlike people, were allured by the riches of their neighbours, and invaded Campania. The inhabitants of Capua, after some feeble attempts to resist the invaders, implored aid from the Romans. The senate answered that their alliance with the Samnites prevented them from giving anything else than their compassion. "If then," said the Capuans, "you will not defend us, you will at least defend yourselves; and from this moment we give ourselves, our cities, our fields, and our gods to the Romans, and become their subjects." The senate accepted the donation, and ordered the Samnites immediately to quit their territories. The necessary consequence was a war, in which the Romans were so successful, that in the third campaign the Samnites were glad to conclude a peace, and renew their treaty of alliance.

In the meantime, the Latins had recovered strength, and meditated to shake off the Roman yoke. A war was the consequence, memorable only for a singular instance of the most exalted patriotism in the consul Decius. This great man, together with his colleague Torquatus, headed the Roman legions. It is said that both the consuls had had a dream, or seen a vision, which assured them that the infernal gods required that one of the contending armies should be devoted to them, and one of the contending generals; and that the general who should have the heroism volun-

tarily to devote himself, would thus doom the army of the enemy to certain destruction. The two consuls agreed to make this heroic sacrifice; and it was resolved between them, as they commanded separate divisions of the army, that he whose division first gave way should immediately devote himself to death. It was in the meantime strictly enjoined to the troops, that no soldier should, during the engagement, advance beyond his rank, as instances of frantic valour were then extremely common. The battle began; and Titus Manlius, the son of the Consul Torquatus, being challenged by a Latin captain, accepted the summons, defeated his antagonist, and returned with his spoils to the main army. His father, with a true Roman severity, ordered his head to be struck off for disobedience. The division commanded by Decius having begun to give way, he caused the Pontifex Maximus to perform in haste the ceremony of consecration; then, girding himself closely with his robe, he spurred his horse with fury into the thickest of the enemies' battalions, where he was instantly cut to pieces. The Romans, now confident of success, rushed on, and the Latins were entirely defeated. The conquerors, by pursuing their success, might have annihilated the Latin name; but they chose to deal more humanely with the vanquished foe, and to preserve them in the character of allied states, on whom they imposed separate conditions of peace, according to the different degrees of merit or demerit which each had exhibited.

Meantime the war with the Samnites was renewed, and carried on for above ten years with various success; many of the other states of Italy taking a part in the quarrel. One event which much humbled the pride of the Romans, was the disgrace they underwent at Caudium. The Samnites, surprising them in a narrow defile near that town, (*Furcæ Caudinæ*, the Caudine Forks,) had it in their power to cut them off to a man. Pontius, the general of the Samnites,

made the whole Roman army, with the consuls at their head, naked and disarmed, pass under the yoke; —a scene described by Livy with great force of natural painting, in the beginning of the ninth book of his history. The historian relates, that when the consuls first informed the army of the fate which the enemy had decreed they should undergo, the soldiers vented their rage in execrations against their commanders, as the authors of this degradation, and were ready to tear them in pieces: but when the dreadful ceremony began, and when they saw the garments torn from the backs of the consuls, and those men whom they had been accustomed to regard with veneration, thus ignominiously treated, every one forgot his own calamity, and, filled with horror, turned aside his eyes, that he might not behold the miserable humiliation of the rulers of his country. It was evening when the Roman army was suffered to pass out of the defile; and when the night came on, naked and destitute of everything, they threw themselves down in despair in a field near the city of Capua. The magistrates, senators, and chief men of the place, repaired to the spot where they lay, and endeavoured to comfort and sooth their distress: but they spoke not a word, nor ever raised their heads from the ground. The next day they proceeded in the same melancholy dejection to Rome, where their disaster had occasioned the utmost consternation, and the whole city had gone into mourning.

By the treaty which the Romans signed after the disgrace of the *Furcæ Caudinæ*, they solemnly bound themselves no more to make war against the Samnites; but they fell upon a shameful device to elude the obligation. Posthumius, one of the consuls, advised that the Romans should pay no regard to the treaty; but that he himself, and all who were actively concerned in making it, should be delivered up to the enemy, who might wreak their vengeance on them as they chose. This strange proposal was agreed to.

Posthumius and the principal officers were sent in chains to Pontius, the general of the Samnites, who, with a generosity which their conduct had not merited, set them at liberty, though with a keen reproach of their shameful disregard of an obligation universally held most sacred.

We enter not into a minute detail of the war with the Samnites: it is to be found at large in Livy. It affords evidence of one fact of importance, that the Romans had now adopted the policy of exterminating, when they were desirous of securing a conquest. The Æqui, in the space of one campaign, lost forty towns, the greater part of which the Romans entirely demolished, and slaughtered the whole inhabitants.

The popular dissensions suffered very little intermission from these warlike enterprises: the priesthood was now the object of contest; and the pretence used by the patricians for excluding the inferior order from that dignity, was religious scruple. But it was not easy to convince the people, that the same rank which was adequate to the exercise of the highest offices of the state, would profane the priesthood; and a law was proposed by two of the tribunes, and passed, which enacted that four new *pontifices* should be created, and five new augurs, and that both orders of the state should be equally eligible to those offices. Thus, all the dignities of the commonwealth were now open alike to both plebeians and patricians: and from this time, consequently, the sole nominal distinction was, that of *the senate and people of Rome.*

The Tarentines took part against the Romans in the war with the Samnites. This people, who were originally a Greek colony from Sparta, had acquired considerable wealth by commerce, and were of an indolent and luxurious character, very opposite to that of their parent state.* Alarmed at the progress of the Roman arms, aware of their ambitious and domi

* Justin. lib. 20.

neering spirit, but unable to make any vigorous effort to resist them, they sought aid from Pyrrhus, the king of Epirus, and invited him, by a flattering deputation, to be the deliverer of Italy from its threatened yoke of servitude. Pyrrhus was one of the ablest generals of his age; but he possessed a restless spirit, and a precipitancy in forming projects of military enterprise, without a due attention to means, or a deliberate estimate of consequences. Cineas, his chief minister, to whom he imparted his design of invading Italy, and mentioned, with great confidence, a perfect assurance of its success, calmly asked him what he proposed after that design was accomplished. "We shall next," said Pyrrhus, "make ourselves masters of Sicily, which, considering the distracted state of that island, will be a very easy enterprise."—"And what next do you intend?" said Cineas. "We shall then," replied Pyrrhus, "pass over into Africa. Do you imagine Carthage is capable of holding out against our arms?"—"And supposing Carthage taken," said Cineas, "what follows?"—"Then," said Pyrrhus, "we return with all our force, and pour down upon Macedonia and Greece."—"And when all is conquered," replied Cineas, "what is then to be done?"—"Why, then, to be sure," said Pyrrhus, "we have nothing to do but to enjoy our bottle, and take our amusement."—"And what," said Cineas, "prevents you from enjoying your bottle now, and taking your amusement?" This dialogue, which is given by Plutarch, with great naïveté, presents us with a just delineation of the real views and sentiments of the greater part of those mighty conquerors who have disturbed the peace of the universe.

Pyrrhus brought to the aid of the Tarentines an army of thirty thousand men. He was astonished that a war, in which they were a principal party, did not, in the least, interrupt the amusements of that frivolous and dissolute people. They gave him some magnificent festivals, and then purposed to leave him to fight, while they continued their entertainments.

This conduct, justly exciting both contempt and indignation. Pyrrhus ordered the theatres to be shut up, closed the public assemblies where the Tarentines idly consumed the time in frivolous talk, and mustering the citizens, enjoined a continued and rigorous exercise to every man who was capable of bearing arms. So severely felt was this duty, that, it is said, a large number of the inhabitants actually fled from their country, rather than suffer a deprivation of their usual pleasures.

Pyrrhus was, for some time, successful. The elephants in his army were a novel sight to the Romans, and for a while gave him a great advantage. It is said, however, that this experienced general, the first time he came in sight of the Roman legions, was struck with their appearance, and with the military skill displayed in their arrangement. "The disposition of these barbarians," said he to one of his officers, "does not savour at all of barbarism. We shall presently see what they can perform." And, in fact, he very soon began to find that even his victories cost him so dear, that there was little room to hope for his ever achieving the conquest of Italy. The Romans soon became accustomed to his mode of fighting, and every campaign proved to him more and more unsuccessful. At length, wishing for an honourable pretext for dropping his enterprise, the Sicilians furnished it, by imploring his aid against the Carthaginians. Pyrrhus, accordingly, embarked his troops for Sicily, and during his absence for two years, the Romans reduced the Samnites, Tarentines, and their allies, to extremity. Pyrrhus returned, and made a last effort near Beneventum, in the Samnian territory. He was totally defeated, lost twenty-six thousand men, and taking the first opportunity of giving his allies the slip, he set sail for Epirus. The Samnites, the Tarentines, the Lucanians, Bruttians, and all the other states, submitted to the arms of the Romans, who were now, in the 480th year from the foundation of the city, masters of

all Italy. It is to be observed, however, that at this time, *Gallia Cisalpina*, or the country between the Appenines and Alps, was not comprehended under the name of *Italy*.

The policy of the Romans with regard to the nations which they conquered is worthy of some attention. The tribes into which the Roman citizens were divided were formerly, as we have seen, a local distinction. Matters were otherwise at this time. It had become a great exertion of political judgment to arrange the members of which the tribes were composed, as on that arrangement depended the issue of any measures to be carried by popular suffrage, or new laws to be enacted. It was the province of the the censors to distribute the citizens in the different tribes. Now, when they formed new tribes from the inhabitants of the conquered countries, they composed these tribes chiefly of the ancient Roman citizens, and transported to Rome the principal men of the conquered nation, whom they ingrafted into the original urban, or rustic tribes of the commonwealth. Thus two good purposes were at once served. The Roman citizens, who principally composed the new tribes, kept the provinces in order, and inspired them with an affection for the Roman government; while, on the other hand, the new citizens dispersed among many of the ancient tribes, and constantly under the eye of Roman magistrates, could have little or no influence in the affairs of the commonwealth.

CHAPTER VIII.

CARTHAGE, a Phœnician Colony—Early History—Government—Wars—Early History of Sicily—Syracusan Government—Dionysius the Elder—Dionysius the Younger—Dion—Timoleon—Agathocles—Character of the Carthaginians and Romans compared.

As we are now arrived at that period, when Rome, mistress of Italy, begins to extend her conquests, and aim at foreign dominion, it is necessary, in order to prepare the mind of the student of history, to follow with advantage the detail of the progress of her arms, that he should have some acquaintance with the history of Carthage, and of Sicily.

Carthage, according to the most probable accounts, was founded by a colony of Tyrians, about seventy years before the building of Rome. The colony had the same language, the same laws, the same customs, and exhibited the same national character with the parent state. The early Carthaginian history is extremely uncertain; but from the vigorous industry of that people who were its founders, and their great progress in the arts, we may suppose that the Carthaginians made a rapid advancement. From the time of the elder Cyrus, their marine was formidable. One of the most ancient naval engagements recorded in history is that in which the Carthaginian fleet, in conjunction with that of the Etruscans, fought against the Phocians of Iona, who were desirous of escaping the yoke of the Persian monarch.

The Carthaginians had by degrees extended their dominion along the whole African coast of the Mediterranean, from the confines of Egypt on the east, to the Pillars of Hercules, or the straits of Gibraltar. Their capital, in the days of its splendour, that is, during the wars with the Romans, was one of the most magnificent and most populous cities in the universe. The number of its inhabitants is said to have

amounted to seven hundred thousand; and it had under its sovereignty about three hundred towns along the Mediterranean coast.

We know nothing of the nature of the earliest government of the Carthaginians, that is, during the first four centuries from the foundation of their empire, and very little even of what it was in the latter periods preceding its dissolution. They are celebrated, however, by Aristotle,* as possessing one of the most perfect constitutions among the ancient republics. They had, like the Romans, two chief magistrates, called *suffetes*, who were chosen annually, and had powers probably much akin to those of the consuls. They had likewise an elective senate, which deliberated on the most important business of the state: but unanimity was required to give effect to their decrees; for if there was a difference of opinion, the matter was immediately remitted to the assembly of the people. They had a tribunal of one hundred and four judges, chosen from the senate, to whom the generals of their armies were responsible for their conduct; and it was not unusual, as we are told, for this tribunal to punish an unsuccessful general with death. All the powers of government seem to have resided in the *suffetes* and senate, if concurring in opinion; for it was only in case of difference, as already said, that the sentiments of the popular assembly were consulted. Aristotle has noted two circumstances, as defects in the constitution of this republic: the one, that it was lawful for the same individual to exercise different offices of state at the same time; the other, that the poor were excluded from holding all offices of importance in the commonwealth. But the former of these may be

* Aristotle, whose account of this republic is on the whole very obscure, gives this strong proof of the excellence of the Carthaginian government, that from the origin of their state down to his own times, the age of Alexander, "its tranquility had never been disturbed either by domestic sedition or the tyranny of its government."—*Arist. de Repub.* lib. ii. cap. 2.

found expedient and even necessary in the best regulated governments, and the latter appears to be agreeable to the soundest policy; for in offices of high trust, poverty might often prove too powerful an excitement to a deviation from duty.

The first settlements of the Carthaginians were entirely in the way of commerce. They traded with the nations on the coast of Spain for gold, and maintaining a constant intercourse with Phœnicia, their parent state and with the other nations on the coasts of the Mediteranean, they became the commercial agents between the eastern and western parts of Europe. Their naval expeditions were not confined to the Mediterranean. They passed the Straits of Gibraltar, and coasting along the African shore, formed settlements even as far as the twenty-fifth degree of north latitude, that is, three degrees south of the Canary Islands, anciently called *Insulæ Fortunatæ*, the fortunate or happy Islands. Hanno, by order of the Carthaginian senate, sailed upon a voyage of discovery along the African coast to the southward, and wrote himself a very curious account of his navigation; an extract from which, or rather a fragment of a Greek translation of which, is still remaining, entitled the *Periplus* of Hanno. It is a valuable remnant of antiquity, written in the style of a plain narrative, without ostentation or embellishment, and very much resembling the journal of a modern navigator. The facts which he relates have nothing of the marvellous, and agree very much with the accounts given by the moderns of the same countries. He observed from his fleet, that in the daytime there was nothing to be seen upon the land, but all was stillness and silence; but in the night he heard the sound of various musical instruments, and saw a great number of fires lighted along the coast: and we know that such is the appearance of great part of the western coast of Africa at this day; that the savages in the daytime retire into the woods to avoid the heat

of the sun; that they light great fires in the night to disperse the beasts of prey; and that they are extremely fond of music and dancing.

The Carthaginians pushed their maritime discoveries likewise to the north of the Straits: they carried on a trade with the ports of Gaul, and even with the southern coast of Britain, whence they drew tin, lead, and copper. They had a settlement in the islands called *Cassiterides*, which are supposed to be the Sicily Islands, on the coast of Cornwall.

At the time of Hannibal it would appear that some degree of taste for Greek literature had prevailed at Carthage. That great man, as Cornelius Nepos informs us, composed several books in the Greek language.* He had for his preceptor in that language Sosilus, a Lacedæmonian. A Carthaginian, Silenus, is likewise mentioned by Cicero as a writer of history in Greek. Sallust, in his history of the Jugurthine war, mentions books written in the Carthaginian language,† which he had consulted in composing his history of that war. Further proof of Carthaginian learning, may be found in the writings of the elder

* Atque hic tantus vir, tantisque bellis distractus, nonnihil temporis tribuit litteris. Namque aliquot ejus libri sunt Græco sermone confecti: in his ad Rhodios de Cn. Manlii Volsonis in Asia rebus gestis. . . . Hujus bella gesta multi memoriæ prodiderunt: sed ex his duo, qui cum eo in castris fuerunt, simulque vixerunt, quamdiu fortuna passa est, Silenus et Sosilus Lacedæmonius. Atque hoc Sosilo Hannibal literarum Græcarum usus est doctere.—*C. Nepos in vit. Hannib.*

"This extraordinary man, though so much engaged in war, devoted a portion of his time to letters. Some parts of his book are even written in the Greek language—as for instance where he treats of the actions of Manlius Volsonis in Asia. . . . His warlike deeds were in the memory of many: of whom were Silenus, and Sosilus the Lacedæmonian, who were in his camp. And by this Sosilus Hannibal was instructed in Greek literature."

† Ex libris Punicis qui regis Hiempsalis dicebantur, interpretatum nobis est.—*Sall. Bell. Jug.*, c. xx.

Pliny; and a specimen of the Carthaginian language is preserved in the Pœnulus of Plautus.*

The Carthaginians, enriched by commerce and increasing in population, soon found their original territory too small for them, and began to aim at extending it by conquest. They armed successively against the Mauritanians, Numidians, and all the neighbouring nations; but as the spirit of war was averse to the habits of an industrious and mercantile people, it was their constant practice to employ mercenary troops, which they levied not only from Africa, but from Spain, Italy, the Mediterranean islands, from Gaul and even Greece. The first of the Carthaginian wars which authentic history records, is that with the Greek colonies of Sicily. They had certainly, however, long before this period, made settlements on that island. Darius, the son of Hystaspes, proposed an alliance with them against the Greeks, and they concluded that treaty with Xerxes, when he followed out the projects of his father. They engaged to attack the Greeks of Sicily, while he invaded the mother-country.

The early periods of the history of Sicily are no less uncertain than those of Carthage. This country was termed *Trinacria*, from its triangular figure, and obtained afterward the name of *Sicania*, from the *Sicani*, who are said to have been originally a people of Spain. The Siculi, an Italian tribe, afterward took possession of the greater part of the island; and from them it was named Sicilia. The Phœnicians are reported to have sent some colonies into this fertile island, before the time of the Trojan war. The Greeks, a considerable while after this period, began to form settlements upon the coasts, and drove the Sicani and the Sicilians into the interior of the country. These Greek colonies brought with them the spirit and manners of their native land; the love of

* Plaut. Pœn. Act v. sc. 1.

independence, and some knowledge of the arts and sciences.* A colony of the Corinthians founded Syracuse, which became the most illustrious of the Grecian cities of Sicily; and from Syracuse arose afterward Agrigentum, Acra, Casmene, Camarine, and several other flourishing towns.

What was the most ancient form of the Syracusan government, we are much at a loss to know. But on the authority of ancient authors, we are assured that it was for a considerable tract of time monarchical; and might long have continued so, had all its sovereigns inherited the eminent virtues and abilities of Gelon its first monarch, who, though severe in his manners, was one of the best of princes; but his successors abusing their power, and exercising the most despotic tyranny, at last drove their subjects to the necessity of abolishing the regal government; and, as if the example had been contagious, the whole Greek cities of Sicily expelled their tyrannic governors, and entered into a general confederacy to secure their individual freedom and independence.

Sixty years after this period, an obscure man of the name of Dionysius, by great address and the most various abilities, had so ingratiated himself with the people of Syracuse, while in the capacity of one of their magistrates, that he gradually usurped the supreme authority. He was a very able general, and successfully withstood the attempts of the Carthaginians to make themselves masters of Sicily. By his army, these formidable invaders, who had obtained possession of a great part of the island, were almost entirely extirpated. Dionysius supported his administration by military force, by extreme severity, and the most rigid despotism; yet there were some features of his character which seemed to indicate a more

* No country, of so narrow bounds, has in ancient times produced more learned men than Sicily. Æschylus, Diodorus Siculus, Empedocles, Gorgias, Euclid, Archimedes, Epicharmus, Theocritus, were all Sicilians by birth.

generous nature. He was fond of literary pursuits, a liberal patron of learned men, and even himself a poet. He contended for the prize of poetry given at the feast of Bacchus, and obtained it; though, if we credit the story told of the poet Philoxenus, this must have been a very partial judgment. Philoxenus, it is said, being invited to dine with Dionysius, and to hear him recite some poetical composition, was the only one of the guests who took the liberty of censuring it. He was condemned to the mines; but being soon after set at liberty, and invited to hear another recitation, he held his peace when it came to his turn to give his opinion. "What," said Dionysius, "have you nothing to say on this occasion?"—"Carry me back to the mines," said Philoxenus. Dionysius, we are told, was not displeased with the answer.

The character of this prince is, on the whole, ambiguous. It is not improbable that the hatred which the Greeks ever affected to bear to the name of tyrant, has made their historians blacken the character of Dionysius more than he deserved.* We read of the constant terror he was under of assassination; of his never venturing to harangue the people, but from the top of a tower; of the dungeon he contrived for the imprisonment of state criminals, constructed in the form of the cavity of the ear, which communicating with an aperture in his private apartment, he could distinctly hear any word that the prisoner uttered; of the horror he had of allowing himself to be shaved, and of his making his daughters singe off his beard with nutshells. But how is all this consistent with

* Dionysius having sent his brother to the Olympic games, to contend in his name for the prize of poetry, the Greeks, who detested his name, hissed the reciters off the stage, and tore his brother's rich pavilion to pieces. Lysias, the orator, made a speech on the occasion, in which he undertook to prove that it was an affront to all Greece, and an insult on their sacred solemnities, to allow the compositions of a wicked tyrant to be publicly rehearsed.—*Plutarch Mor.*

the certain facts, of his commanding his armies in person; his overseeing his numerous artisans employed in the public works; his familiar intercourse with men of science; his magnificent entertainments; and, at length, his dying of a debauch at a public festival? Great allowance must be made for the prejudices of those writers who have given us the character of Dionysius.

After the death of Dionysius the elder, the crown of Syracuse passed without opposition to Dionysius his son, an idle, weak, and dissolute prince, whom his father, to repress any premature schemes of ambition, had kept in profound ignorance. Along with the tyrannical disposition of his father, he had the same passion, or at least the same affectation of a taste, for literature. The philosopher, Plato, had been invited to Syracuse, by Dionysius the elder, and had contracted an intimate friendship with Dion the brother-in-law of Dionysius, of whom, in one of his epistles, he gives this high character, that he had never met with a young man on whom his philosophical principles had made so great an impression. But their effect on Dionysius himself was not so favourable; for, being offended with the freedom which the philosopher used in censuring whatever he disapproved in the maxims and government of the tyrant, the latter ordered him to be sold as a slave in the public market. His disciples paid the price of five minæ for their master, and sent him safe back to Greece. Dion, from an earnest desire of reforming the morals of his kinsman, the younger Dionysius, persuaded him to invite the philosopher once more to return to Sicily. Plato came, and virtue and learning seemed for a while to reign at Syracuse; but their dominion was of short duration; for the corrupted courtiers of Dionysius prevailed on him to banish Dion, and Plato followed his favourite disciple.

The exile of Dion was aggravated by circumstances of the most flagrant injustice and oppression: his

property was confiscated, and Areta, his wife, the sister of Dionysius, was by that tyrant compelled to enter into another marriage with a sycophant of his court. The more respectable part of the Syracusans were indignant at these outrages, which reflected dishonour on the state, and sought earnestly to rid themselves from their yoke. They held a secret correspondence with Dion, whom they prevailed on to aid them in their design of effecting a revolution. With the aid of foreign troops whom he levied in Greece, and supported by all the Syracusans, who favoured the cause of liberty, Dion compelled the tyrant to evacuate Syracuse, and seek refuge in Italy. But the austere manners of the virtuous Dion were not suited to a licentious and corrupted people. He lost the affections of his subjects; they forgot his services, and deposed and banished him. He was recalled, indeed, soon after, but to meet with a worse fate; for while he sought to appease the seditions excited by the partisans of Dionysius, he was assassinated by an infamous Athenian, on whom he had bestowed his chief confidence.

Aided by the distractions of Syracuse, consequent on the death of Dion, Dionysius regained the throne, ten years after his expulsion: but his tyrannical disposition inflamed, not mitigated by his misfortunes, soon became so intolerable, that he was expelled a second time; and banished to Corinth, he there ended his days in poverty and obscurity. It is said, that the tyranny of his nature found a congenial gratification in exercising the employment of a schoolmaster.

This last revolution had been effected by the aid of Timoleon, a noble Corinthian, whom his countrymen deputed to restore the liberties of their ancient colony. Timoleon had distinguished himself by an ardent passion for republican freedom, which had even hurried him into the commission of a shocking crime. Unable to dissuade his brother, Timophanes, from a design of usurping the sovereignty of his native state,

he caused two of his friends to assassinate him, in his own presence. This deed, though applauded by his fellow-citizens, was attended by such severe remorse, that he threw up all public employment, and wandered in melancholy dejection for a period of twenty years. He was now, however, summoned to take the command of the expedition to Sicily, and his favourite passion prompted him to obey the summons.

The Carthaginians having some settlements in Sicily, had long earnestly looked to the acquisition of the whole island, and at this time, under the pretext of aiding the Syracusans in the design of dethroning their tyrant, had landed a large force, and seized and garrisoned several of the Sicilian towns. Dionysius, reduced to extremity between the Carthaginian army on the one side, and the troops of Timoleon on the other, chose to enter into a capitulation with the latter, and agreed to abandon his throne, and purchase his life by a voluntary banishment into Greece. Timoleon sent him in a single galley to Corinth. Having delivered Syracuse from her tyrant, he now turned his arms against the Carthaginians, whom he defeated in several battles, and compelled to yield up all their new acquisitions, confining themselves within the limits of their ancient possessions.

Having thus honourably fulfilled the original object of his mission, in giving peace and liberty to the Syracusans, Timoleon found his aid and alliance eagerly courted by the other republics of Sicily, who desired to follow the example of Syracuse in expelling their domestic tyrants and establishing a free constitution. This purpose successfully accomplished, Timoleon now applied himself to the means of repairing the wasted population of the Syracusan territory, by recalling all those citizens whom the tyranny of the late government had compelled to abandon their country, and by prompting new settlers to resort thither by every encouragement which good policy could suggest. This truly great man had no sooner

brought about a regular and stable administration of government, than he gave an illustrious proof how disinterested had been the motives of his conduct, by resigning all power, and returning to the condition of a private citizen. As such he passed the remainder of his days, highly honoured and beloved by that people who owed to his virtues their liberty and their happiness.

It is not difficult to account for those revolutions to which we have observed the state of Syracuse was so much exposed. The city had acquired great wealth by commerce. The overgrown fortunes of individuals put it in their power not only to stir up factions and cabals, but even to raise armies. The state likewise was in use to employ only foreign troops, and thus afforded a tempting opportunity to strangers to aim at attaining power and influence in the republic. Had there been in Sicily any other state so formidable as to balance the power of Syracuse, we should then have seen in that country nearly the same scenes that we have observed in Greece. We should have seen the inferior states pass from the alliance of one to that of the other; associations constantly formed to maintain a balance of power, and at the same time a cordial union of the whole against a foreign enemy. But as the power of Syracuse was not kept down by any formidable rival in Sicily, this circumstance obliged the inferior states who wished to avoid her yoke to seek aid from abroad, and thus Sicily was laid open to the Carthaginians and to the Greeks.

The Syracusans did not long enjoy the liberty and peace to which they had been restored by Timoleon. Agathocles, a man who had risen from a low condition to the first military honours, and the command of their fleets and armies, took advantage of that power to render himself master of the city. Besieged by the Carthaginians in Syracuse, he carried the war into Africa, ravaged the country to the gates of Car-

thage, and defeated their army in a signal engagement, which had very near proved fatal to their empire. He suffered, however, a signal reverse of fortune. During his absence in Africa the Sicilian states, oppressed by Syracuse, formed a league in defence of their liberties. Agathocles having reimbarked a part of his troops, with the design of chastising this revolt, the Carthaginians, in the meantime, reduced the remainder of the Syracusan army to such extremity, that even the return of their leader was insufficient to retrieve their losses. Regarding their situation as desperate, Agathocles, with the meanest treachery, abandoned his army in the night, and escaped back to Sicily in a single vessel, leaving his two sons to the mercy of the Carthaginians, who put them both to death. His vengeance now found an object in reducing the Sicilian states, whose revolt had been the immediate cause of his disasters; but while actively engaged in this purpose, his life was shortened by poison.

The Carthaginians, still intent on the acquisition of Sicily, now invested Syracuse with an immense fleet and an army of fifty thousand men. Unable effectually with their own power to resist this overwhelming force, the Syracusans solicited aid from Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, who, as we have before seen, had at this time abandoned all hope of achieving the conquest of Italy. He seized this occasion as an honourable pretext for withdrawing his troops from that country. The Syracusans received him with open arms, and put him in possession of their city, their fleet, and the public treasure. Pyrrhus, with this combination of force, was for some time eminently successful; but on a change, as we have before related, this prince thought it his wisest course to drop his schemes of ambition, and return to Epirus. On quitting Sicily, he is said to have exclaimed, "What a beautiful field of battle do we leave for the Romans and Carthaginians!" His

prediction was speedily fulfilled, for immediately after began the first Punic war.

The character of the Carthaginians, and that of the Romans, whom we shall now see engaged in war for a long series of years, formed a very remarkable contrast to each other. As this difference of character may, perhaps, be accounted for on one single principle, I shall endeavour very shortly to unfold that principle, in a few observations on the effects of a commercial life upon the genius, manners, and laws of a nation.

One most natural effect of the commercial spirit is a selfish and interested turn of mind; a habit of measuring everything by the standard of profit and loss, and a predominant idea that wealth is the main constituent both of public and private happiness. The contrast of character, in this respect, between the Romans and the Carthaginians, has been finely remarked by Polybius. "In all things," says that judicious writer, "which regard the acquisition of wealth, the manners and customs of the Romans are infinitely preferable to those of the Carthaginians. This latter people esteemed nothing to be dishonourable that was connected with gain. Among them, money is openly employed to purchase the dignities and offices of the state; but all such proceedings are capital crimes at Rome." I am afraid that a contrast, so honourable to the Romans, could only have been made with justice in the early periods of the republic; since we know that without an increase of commerce, to which might be attributed the consequent increase of corruption and venality, those vices had attained to as great a height toward the end of the republic at Rome, as ever they had done in Carthage. But wealth acquired by plunder, rapine, and peculation, is yet more corruptive of the manners of a people, than riches acquired by merchandise.

Another effect of the prevalence of the commercial spirit, is to depress the military character of a people,

and to render them indisposed to warlike enterprises. The advancement of trade cannot take place in any high degree, unless a nation is at peace with its neighbours, and enjoys domestic security. The prospect of that precarious gain which arises from warfare, will not weigh against the certain advantages which commerce derives from a state of peace. The art of war will not, therefore, flourish as a profession among a commercial people, and the practice of it will generally be intrusted to mercenary troops. Military rank will be in low esteem, because, when purchased, it ceases in a great degree to be honourable. Thus the Carthaginians, though certainly not inferior by nature to the Romans in courage and military prowess, were become so from habit and education. The armies of the empire were not composed of its native subjects; they were mercenaries, and, therefore, had no natural affection for that soil which they were called to defend, or that people who were nothing more than their paymasters. Hence the signal inferiority of their armies to the Romans, unless when commanded by Carthaginian generals of high, natural, military genius, who could bring their force into action as a great machine directed by one simple moving power. Public spirit and a high tone of national virtue are rarely to be found in states whose principal object is commerce. Patriotism cannot flourish where the spirit of gain predominates. Each individual, feeling interests separate from, and often incompatible with that of the state, it is not surprising that what regards only the good of the community should have but small influence; and even that private advantage, and the enrichment of individuals, should be the mainspring of public measures.

But this, it may be said, is the dark side of the picture. Let us, therefore, attend to those beneficial conseq ences, which may naturally be attributed to the prevalence of the commercial spirit in a nation.

And of these what immediately strikes us, as the

most obvious, is the general diffusion of industry. Among a commercial people, the faculties both of mind and body are of necessity almost continually employed. Invention is ever on the stretch to discover new sources of gain; and the enterprising spirit of the more opulent furnishes constant occupation to the mechanic, the manufacturer, and the labourer.

Inseparably connected with the general diffusion of industry, is a spirit of frugality. Riches have their full value when purchased by the labour either of the mind or body, and what costs dear will not be frivolously expended. Justin has remarked the parsimony as well as the industry of the Tyrians. Strabo and Cicero give the same character of the people of Marseilles, and Diodorus Siculus of the Carthaginians. In modern times we observe the association of the same qualities among the Dutch and the Chinese.

Another necessary consequence of the prevalence of commerce, is a regularity and strictness of the national police, a severity of the laws with respect to mutual contracts and obligations, and a consequent security in the transactions of individuals with each other.* I know not whether a certain degree of refinement in manners, at least to the length of general courtesy and affability both to those of the same nation and to foreigners, be not a consequence of the spirit of trade; a refinement of manners, however, very different from that of a luxurious people, where the laws of behaviour arise chiefly from motives of ease and pleasure, or are dictated by gallantry or a high point of honour.

Science is likewise in many respects greatly indebted to commerce. Thus astronomy, navigation, general mathematics, mechanics, and indeed all sciences

* When the Roman writers inveigh against the *Punica fides*, (*Carthaginian honour*,) the censure applies to their character in war; and even in that respect it may well be questioned whether Roman character stood in any higher degree of estimation.

subservient to practical utility, are greatly advanced by it, and derive a vast encouragement from the demands which it occasions for the productions of the useful arts. With regard to literature there is greater doubt. The labour of the head in those productions which tend only to amusement, or at least a refinement of the intellectual powers, without any obvious consequence as to the practical business of worldly life, will not, it is probable, meet with much encouragement among a people whose views extend no farther than the substantial acquisitions of wealth and property.

Such are the principal effects of the spirit of commerce on the character and manners of a nation; and such accordingly we find to constitute the principal features of the Carthaginian character opposed to the Roman.

CHAPTER IX.

First Punic War—First Naval victory of the Romans—Invasion of Africa—Regulus—Termination of the War—Second Punic War—Hannibal passes the Alps—His victories in Italy—Battle of Cannæ—Hannibal winters in Capua—Siege of Syracuse—defended by Archimedes—Battle of Zama—and end of Second Punic War—Defeat of Philip II. of Macedon—of Antiochus, king of Syria—Cato the Censor—Accusation of Scipio Africanus—His character—Scipio Asiaticus—War with Perseus and reduction of Macedonia—Third Punic War, and Destruction of Carthage.

It has been justly remarked that the Romans, although an ambitious people, did not begin to form plans of extensive conquest, till they had sufficient strength to undertake them with advantage. The triumph which their arms had obtained over Pyr-

rhus, the most able and the most experienced general of his time, seemed to give them an assurance of success in any military enterprise in which they should engage.

The first Punic war took its rise from the following cause. The Mamertines, a people of Campania, had taken possession of Messina, one of the Sicilian towns allied to Syracuse. Hiero, king of Syracuse, had marched against these invaders, who, conscious that they were unable to withstand so powerful an antagonist, applied for aid, first to the Carthaginians, and afterward, from rational fear of being enslaved by this power, to the Romans. Although this was a very unjustifiable quarrel, the Romans made no scruple to take a part; and they sent a large army, which engaged and defeated the united forces of the Syracusans and Carthaginians. The king of Syracuse having now experienced to his cost the power of the Roman arms, was glad to court their alliance; flattering himself, by this means, with the prospect of absolutely expelling from Sicily the Carthaginians, who had long entertained the design of annexing this island to their empire, and had made considerable progress in that design.

By the joint forces of the Romans and Syracusans, Agrigentum, one of the principal cities then possessed by the Carthaginians, was taken, after a long siege. The Romans, encouraged by this success, and conscious of the great advantage which the enemy derived from their marine, began to think of equipping a fleet to cope with them at sea, as well as on land. A Carthaginian galley, stranded on the coast of Italy, is said to have served them as a model; and, by a wonderful effort of industry, they equipped in a few weeks a hundred similar to it, with five banks of oars —and twenty of a smaller size with three banks. The Consul Dicilius made an improvement on these ships-of-war, by the invention of a machine called *Corvus*—a sort of crane, which, falling down and

fastening upon the ships of the enemy, brought them to a close engagement, and served at the same time as a bridge or gangway for boarding them. All new inventions are usually successful at first, from the surprise which they occasion. The Roman fleet gained a most complete victory over that of the Carthaginians. A vast number of their ships were destroyed, above seven thousand men killed, and an equal number made prisoners.*

For a few years, the success of the Romans was uninterrupted. They took from the Carthaginians the islands of Corsica and Sardinia; and in the naval engagement at Ecnomus, having captured sixty of the enemy's ships, they now thought themselves in a situation to attempt the invasion of Africa.

The consul Attilus Regulus had the command of that expedition. The history of this illustrious man, particularly the latter part of it, is, by some modern writers, suspected of being fabulous; and indeed they have advanced some very plausible arguments against the belief of its authenticity: yet it is found in the best of the Roman writers, and is in itself so beautiful, that we cannot hastily resolve to refuse it credit. Regulus, after several successful engagements in Africa, had advanced even to the gates of Carthage; and such was the general consternation, that the city proposed to capitulate. It had been glorious for Regulus thus to have terminated the war by an advantageous and honourable peace; but, blinded by success, the terms he insisted on were so severe, that, even situated as they were, the Carthaginians rejected them. In the meantime, a large body of Greek troops arrived to their assistance. This changed the fortune

* This naval engagement was fought on the coast of Sicily, near Mylæ, now Milazzo. A monument of the victory was erected at Rome, which subsists to this day—the *columna rostrata*—a column ornamented with the beaks or prows of the ancient ships, dug up about two hundred years ago, and now standing in the capitol.

of the war; the Carthaginians assumed new courage, and with an army largely reinforced, attacking the Romans, they gained an important victory, and made Regulus their prisoner.

The Romans, undismayed by this great misfortune, prosecuted the war with fresh vigour. Metellus, in Sicily, was carrying everything before him. He defeated Asdrubal, the Carthaginian general, in a signal engagement near Panormus; and Carthage, dispirited by her losses, began seriously to wish for peace. Ambassadors for that purpose were despatched to Rome; and Regulus was sent along with them, as it was not doubted that the negotiation, seconded by the endeavours of this general, whom his country most deservedly respected, would be easily terminated. They exacted at the same time from him an oath—that he would return to Carthage, in case there should neither be peace nor an exchange of prisoners. To the surprise of all, this great and generous man used his utmost endeavour to dissuade his countrymen from agreeing to a peace; a proposition which he represented as proceeding solely from the weakness of the enemy, whom, by continuing the war, they would compel to any submission. But still further, he even dissuaded his countrymen from consenting to an exchange of prisoners; a measure which he endeavoured to convince them must be to their disadvantage, from this circumstance, that they had in their hands many of the best officers of the enemy, whom they would be obliged to exchange against private men. His arguments prevailed, and the negotiation was broken off.

Of the conduct of Regulus, and of the nature of the obligation which bound him, there have been various opinions, both among the ancients and moderns. Cicero argues the matter at great length in the third book of his offices.* He applauds the conduct of Regulus, not only in the strict observance of his oath,

* Cic. de Offic. l. iii. c. xxvi. et seq.

but in his dissuasive against the exchange of prisoners. On the other hand, Sir Walter Raleigh, in his excellent History of the World, has distinguished between these two actions. He applauds the conduct of Regulus in strictly maintaining the obligation of his oath, and in opposing the treaty of peace with the enemy; but his dissuading his countrymen from agreeing to an exchange of prisoners, he censures as a piece of ostentatious stoicism, and even inhumanity, which no good reason of state could justify. And this we must think a sound opinion. The latter part of the conduct of this illustrious man must on all hands meet with admiration. The Pontifex Maximus, on being consulted on the validity of the oath he had sworn to return to Carthage, gave it as his opinion that, it having been extorted by the necessity of his situation, he was under no obligation to observe it. But the noble soul of Regulus could not admit of such evasion. Disregarding the entreaties of his friends, the tears of his wife and children, the urgent remonstrance of the senate and of the whole Roman people, this generous and heroic man resolved that no terror, of no consequence how dreadful soever, should persuade him to a violation of his honour.* "I am not ignorant," said he, "that death and the severest tortures are preparing for me; but what are these to the stain of an infamous action, the reproach of a guilty mind? I have sworn to return to Carthage: it is therefore my duty to go. Let the gods direct the consequence as to their wisdom shall seem best." To Carthage, accordingly, he returned, where, as he had foreseen, he suffered a cruel and ignominious death.†

* This scene is beautifully described by Horace, Od. iii. 5, 49.

† Most of the ancient writers concur in the assertion, that Regulus was put to death in a very barbarous manner by the Carthaginians. The authors of the Ancient Universal History relate as the most common opinion, that he was first exposed to a burning sun, with his eyelids cut off, and afterward shut up in a cask, stuck around with sharp nails, in

The war in the meantime continued. Lilybœum, one of the strongest places belonging to the Carthaginians in Sicily, after a siege of many years, by the Romans, with the aid of the Syracusans, and the most signal efforts on both sides of courage, skill, and perseverance, was taken, in the tenth year, by blockade. After some alternate successes at sea, the Romans were victorious in two naval engagements; in the last of which, the Consul Lutatius defeated Hamilcar Barcas, the father of the great Hannibal, and compelled the Carthaginians to sue for peace, which was not granted

which he was suffered to die of hunger and want of sleep.—*Anc. Un. Hist.* vol. xii. p. 191. It must, however, be owned, that great doubt hangs over all the accounts that are given of the inhuman treatment of Regulus. Polybius, who is extremely minute in everything relative to the history of this illustrious man, is entirely silent as to his fate; which, had it been such as is commonly related, he could never have omitted to mention. He assures us, in the first book of his History, that he has been most particular in his account of Regulus, that others may derive improvement from his example, in not trusting too much to a course of prosperous fortune. As, therefore, the calamitous death of Regulus was the strongest exemplification of this moral lesson, it is impossible to believe that he would have studiously avoided the mention of the above particulars, if they had been true.

But there is in reality a positive testimony against the truth of those atrocious circumstances above related. Among various fragments of ancient authors, collected by the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, is a passage from Diodorus Siculus, in which it is asserted that the death of Regulus was owing to neglect—probably the carelessness of his keepers in omitting to supply him with food. The author adds, that the widow of Regulus instigated her sons, in revenge of their father's death, to wreak their resentment against two of the Carthaginian prisoners who had fallen into their hands, one of whom they actually starved to death. The other was fortunate enough to convey intelligence to the Roman magistrate of his comrade's death and his own intended fate, in consequence of which the Attilii very narrowly escaped a capital punishment. See Toland's Works, vol. ii. p. 42, where there is a translation of the fragment of Diodorus, and a proof of its authenticity.

them but on the hardest conditions. These were, that they should abandon all their possessions in Sicily; that, in the space of twenty years, they should pay to the Romans two thousand two hundred talents of silver—about one million, four hundred and forty-five thousand dollars; that they should restore, without ransom, all their prisoners; and lastly, that they should not make war against Hiero, the king of Syracuse, or any of his allies. The Roman people refused to ratify this treaty, unless on the further conditions, that they should have an additional thousand talents for the expenses of the war; that the whole sum should be paid in ten years instead of twenty; and that the Carthaginians should yield up all the small islands which they possessed upon the coast of Italy. Sicily was declared a Roman province, with the exception of the kingdom of Syracuse. A prætor and quæstor were sent thither yearly, the former as a civil judge, the latter to collect the revenues.

Thus, the Romans, after a war of twenty-four years, begun under every disadvantage, destitute of finances, totally unprovided with a fleet, and, of course, ignorant of navigation, were, at length, able to prescribe the most humiliating terms to Carthage, the first maritime power in the world.

At the end of the first Punic war, the temple of Janus was shut—an event which had not happened since the reign of Numa, that is, near 500 years. In a few years it was again opened, and never shut till the reign of Augustus.

The treaty with the Carthaginians was of no long duration. It was of too humbling a nature to the pride of this mighty power, to subsist longer than absolute necessity compelled:—a useful lesson of moderation to a victorious people. No sooner had a little time allowed the vanquished state to repair her losses, than the war broke out again, with redoubled animosity. The Carthaginians began hostilities by the siege of Saguntum, a city of Spain, then in alliance with the Romans. The siege was conducted by

Hannibal, then a very young man, but who, from his infancy, had been inured to arms, and had all the qualities of a great general. His character has been drawn by Livy with the pencil of a master:—"Hannibal, being sent into Spain, on his arrival drew the eyes of the whole army upon him. The old soldiers believed that Hamilcar was again restored to life, and that they saw once more the same look of decision, the same fire of the eye, the very countenance and lineaments of their leader. Speedily, there was no need of such recollections of the father to endear to them the son. None ever showed a happier aptitude of disposition, whether in obeying or commanding; so that it was impossible to say whether he was most prized by the general or by the army. Nor, in whatever service of difficulty or of danger, would Asdrubal appoint any other to the command, or the troops engage under any other with equal confidence and courage. His boldness in undertaking a perilous enterprise was equalled by his prudence in conducting it. His strength, neither of body nor mind, was ever seen to yield to the severest labour. Insensible alike to heat or cold, his food and drink were limited to the necessities of nature, never indulged to gratification. All hours of the day or night were to him alike, whether for duty or repose; what could be spared from the former was given to the latter; no appliances were wanted—no soft couch, or silent retirement. Often was he seen, amid the bustle of a military post, snatching a brief repose on the bare ground, his cloak his only covering. He affected no superiority of dress; valuing himself only on his arms and on his horses; himself the hardiest foot-soldier, and the most gallant horseman, the first to rush into combat, the last to quit the field. Yet were these high qualities counteracted by enormous vices, by the most inhuman cruelty, by worse than Punic perfidy, by the utter disregard of truth and of everything sa-

cred—owning no fear of Heaven, and regardless alike of promises and oaths."

Saguntum was taken by Hannibal after a siege of seven months, in which the inhabitants had endured the utmost miseries attendant on war. Faithful to their alliance with the Romans, this brave people defended themselves to the last extremity; and when at length convinced that their resistance was ineffectual, they set fire to the city, and the whole of them either perished in the flames, or were cut to pieces by the Carthaginians.

The military strength of the Romans was, at this time, very considerable. They had six legions in the field, amounting to twenty-four thousand foot and eighteen thousand horse: they had, besides, from the auxiliary states of Italy, an army of forty-eight thousand men; and their marine consisted of two hundred and forty ships-of-war.

The forces of the Carthaginians were commanded in chief by Hannibal; and this intrepid man now formed the daring project of carrying the war at once into the heart of Italy. He procured the minutest information as to every difficulty he would have to encounter, and took the most judicious care to provide against all obstacles. He gained, by kindness and by presents, a number of the Gauls to his interest, and thus smoothed his way through a country hostilely disposed, but not daring to attempt an effectual opposition. The passage of the Ebro, and the defiles of the Pyrenees, were small obstacles to those his resolution and intrepidity surmounted. On the first intelligence of the march of the Carthaginians, Publius Scipio, the consul, had taken the field with a large army, and hoped by rapid marches to arrest him in the first part of his progress, and to make the country of the Transalpine Gauls the theatre of the war; but Hannibal had got the start of him, and had already passed the Rhone in the face of an opposing army. He took his way along the eastern banks of that

river to Lyons, and thence to one of the chief passes of the Alps—not improbably that which is now known by the name of the Great St. Bernard. On proceeding to ascend the mountains, he found the country in some parts buried in snow, and at every defile defended by large troops of mountaineers. He overcame by astonishing perseverance every difficulty, and, at length, in the space of fifteen days, penetrated into that country which he had promised to his troops as the end and the reward of their labours. The time occupied in the whole of this march was five months and a half. His army on leaving Carthage amounted to fifty thousand foot and twenty thousand horse; but of these, on arriving in Italy, there remained only twenty thousand foot and six thousand horse. This expedition, of which Polybius and Livy have each given a detailed narration, (differing in a few minute particulars,) is deservedly reckoned one of the most remarkable exploits of antiquity.*

In the first battle with the Carthaginians in Italy, the Romans were defeated. The consul Scipio was wounded, and must have fallen into the hands of the enemy, but for the bravery of his son, the younger Scipio, then a youth of fifteen years of age, afterward known by the glorious surname of Africanus. The Romans lost another battle near the river Trebia in the neighbourhood of Placentia. They received a still more signal overthrow near the lake Thrasymenus, where the consul Flaminius was killed, and his army cut to pieces. The Roman historians themselves allow that Hannibal, amid these successes, behaved with a moderation which added lustre to his victories. If his clemency was affected, his prudence at least was admirable. The prisoners belonging to the allied states he dismissed without ransom, and endeavoured to make them regard him as their de-

* The route of Hannibal across the Alps is not described by the ancient writers with such accuracy as to give any certainty of its precise direction.

liverer from the oppression they suffered under the yoke of the Romans.

A misunderstanding that prevailed between the two new consuls, Varro and Emilius, was the immediate cause of that fatal defeat which the Romans sustained in Cannæ in Apulia, and which brought the republic to the very brink of destruction. The consuls took the chief command alternately, each for a day; an unwise arrangement, which demanded the most perfect consonance of designs and of tempers. It was the turn of Varro, who, eager to signalize himself, was imprudent enough to attack the army of Hannibal, then admirably posted, and which had every advantage both of disposition and situation. The manœuvres of the Carthaginian general in the battle of Cannæ showed the most profound knowledge in the military art. I shall not here enter into a particular detail of them; but when I come to treat of the system of war among the ancients, I shall select as an example this great battle, and shall endeavour to give some idea of that very simple and admirable manœuvre planned by Hannibal in the heat of the engagement, to which the Carthaginians owed their success. The Roman army was entirely cut to pieces. Forty thousand were left dead upon the field of battle, among whom was the consul Emilius, and almost the whole body of the Roman knights. Varro, the other consul, followed by a few horse, fled precipitately to Venusia.

The Romans, amid the consternation of so great a disaster, displayed a magnanimity truly heroic. The senate, on the first report of the fate of their army, ordered the gates of the city to be shut, lest the exaggerated intelligence of those who fled from the fight should add to the general alarm. The women were forbid to stir out of their houses, lest their cries and lamentations should dispirit those who had their country to defend; and the senators exerted themselves in every quarter to dispel the fears of the people.

Varro, from the wreck of the army, was able to collect ten thousand men; with these he repaired to Rome to defend the city, in case Hannibal, as was expected, should immediately attack it. This measure was undoubtedly his wisest policy, and he was strongly urged to it by Maherbal, one of his ablest officers. It appeared, however, to Hannibal, a doubtful enterprise; and while he deliberated, the opportunity was lost. Varro, whose temerity was the cause of this great disaster, on approaching Rome with the shattered remains of the army whom he had with much pains collected, was met by the senate and received their solemn thanks, *because he had not despaired of the republic.**

The effect of this spirited conduct was wonderful. The citizens thronged to carry their money to the public treasury. All above the age of seventeen, of whatever rank, enrolled themselves, and formed an army of four legions and ten thousand horse. Eight thousand of the slaves voluntarily offered their services, and with the consent of their masters were embodied and armed. The allied states likewise furnished troops in proportion to their abilities.

The success of Hannibal was variously judged of

* Varro, however unfortunate in this affair, and justly censurable for his temerity, was both a brave and a modest man. His countrymen were so sensible of his virtues and abilities, that they proposed in this emergency to create him dictator; but he refused that high situation. "Confregit rempublicam Terentius Varro, Cannensis pugnæ temerario ingressu; idem delatam sibi ab universo senatu et populo dictaturam recipere non sustinendo, pudore culpam maximæ cladis redemit; effecitque ut clades deorum iræ, modestia ipsius moribus imputaretur."—*Valer. Max.* lib. iv. c. 5.

"By his rash attack on the enemy at the battle of Cannæ Terentius Varro had well nigh ruined the republic; and still, in declining the dictatorship unanimously offered to him by the senate and people, he, in a great measure, redeemed his fault by his modesty; causing this disaster to be ascribed to the anger of the gods, while the modesty he had manifested was generously attributed to the virtuousness of his character."

at Carthage. The most sanguine, and the most short-sighted, concluded that Rome was now annihilated, *et quod actum erad de republica Romana*, and that the Roman Republic was at an end. The wiser part reasoned far otherwise. They had heard of the conduct of the city subsequent to that great disaster, and they judged that while that spirit existed, there was much yet which remained for them to conquer. But even the most sagacious could not have foreseen that Hannibal was to ruin himself by his own imprudence. Capua, the metropolis of Campania, had opened her gates to the victor; the winter furnished a pretext to his troops to desire some respite from their fatigues; and he yielded to the blandishments of ease, and to the seduction of luxury. While his army indulged in all the variety of pleasures, they believed they had now attained the end and the reward of their toils; daily desertions weakened their numbers; and the Romans soon recovered the superiority they had lost.

The proconsul Sempronius Gracchus, at the head of an army composed chiefly of slaves, defeated eighteen thousand Carthaginians at Beneventum. With permission of the senate, he had promised all of them their liberty if they proved victorious, and this prospect gave them the courage of heroes. Philip II., king of Macedon, having made an alliance with Hannibal, landed in Italy and laid siege to Apollonia, but being surprised in his camp by the pro-prætor Lævinus, and utterly defeated, with difficulty secured his retreat to his own dominions.

The republic owed much to the military skill and prudence of the consul Fabius, justly surnamed Maximus, who found the true secret of weakening the Carthaginians and wearing out the spirits of their leaders, by avoiding a general engagement. An army at a distance from the source of its supplies, and in a hostile country, must act with unremitting vigour—or perish. The Syracusans having broken their alliance

with Rome, and taken part with the Carthaginians, Marcellus, who, previous to the disaster of Cannæ, had defeated Hannibal before Nola, in Campania, being at this time pro-consul in Sicily, formed the design of besieging Syracuse. This, however, was found a more difficult enterprise than had been expected. The genius of a single man was found sufficient to withstand for a great length of time the utmost efforts of an enemy by sea and land. This extraordinary man was Archimedes. It is pity that the ancient authors who have minutely detailed the prodigious effects of those machines which he constructed, and so successfully employed in this remarkable siege, have given accounts so obscure and imperfect of their construction. The city was twenty-two miles in compass, and was completely defended at every point both on the quarter of the land and sea. The Roman fleet consisted of sixty galleys of five banks of oars, and an immense number of smaller vessels. These were manned with archers, slingers, and engineers, who worked the *balista** and *catapulta** erected on their decks. Marcellus caused eight galleys to be joined together laterally by iron chains, and on their surface, as a foundation, an immense tower was erected, whose height overtopped the walls of the city. This huge machine, which Marcellus called his *Sambuca*, or Dulcimer, was slowly advancing, rowed by a great number of men, when Archimedes discharged from one of his engines a stone of twelve hundred and fifty pounds weight, then a second, and immediately afterward a third, with a direction so sure as to batter the galleys and the tower to pieces in a few minutes. An immense artillery of darts, stones, burning torches, and every material of annoyance, was incessantly launched upon the besiegers from every quarter of the walls; while the machines from which they issued were altogether beyond their

* Warlike engines to throw stones or darts.

reach and even out of their sight. It was of no avail whether they made their attack from a distance or close to the walls. If within the shot of a bow, the engines of Archimedes assailed the galleys with stones of such weight as entirely to demolish them; if they approached the walls, they were seized by cranes and grappling irons, suspended in the air, and suddenly let fall with a force that sunk them. Taking the advantage of a meridian sun, and concentrating the rays by a combination of polished plates of metal, this wonderful engineer burnt the vessels of the enemy at a furlong's distance*—thus, in the words of an old writer, making even the fire of heaven obedient to his commands.† Such, says Plutarch, became at length the terror of the Roman soldiers at this almost supernatural warfare, that if any man saw the small-

* Some of the moderns have questioned the authenticity of the accounts given by ancient writers of the wonderful machines of Archimedes, and particularly of that apparatus of mirrors by which it is said he burnt the enemy's ships (see Descartes, Dioptric. Disc. viii., Fontenelle, Œuvres, &c.); but the more general opinon of men of science is in favour of their credibility. M. de Buffon constructed a burning-glass composed of one hundred and sixty-eight plain mirrors, which set fire to wood at the distance of two hundred and nine feet, and melted lead at the distance of one hundred and twenty. Leibnitz did justice to this great genius among the ancients when he said, "Qui Archimedem intellegit, recentiorum summorum viorum inventa parciùs mirabitum,"‡ and Dr. Wallis, speaking of Archimedes, terms him, "Vir stupendæ sagacitatis, qui prima fundamenta posuit inventionum ferè omnium, de quibus promovendis ætas nostra gloriatur."§ See Duten's Inquiry into the Discoveries of the Moderns, part iii. ch. 10, 12.

† Eustath. ad. Iliad, E.

‡ "Whoever is acquainted with Archimedes, will scarcely be disposed to wonder at the inventions of the most illustrious men of modern times."

§ "A man of stupendous genius, who laid the foundations of almost every invention; and of whose previous discoveries the present age vain-gloriously boasts."

est piece of cord or wood making its appearance above the walls, he instantly took to flight, crying out to his companions that they were to be overwhelmed in a moment by some tremendous power.

But the perseverance of the Romans prevailed at length over the valour of the Syracusans and the genius of Archimedes. In the third year of the siege the city was carried by surprise. Marcellus took advantage of a great festival which the Syracusans celebrated in honour of Diana, and in the dead of night, while the sentinels were sunk in sleep after a deep debauch, scaling the walls at the same moment in several different quarters, the Romans were in possession of a great part of the town before the Syracusans were aware of their danger. Marcellus wished to save this great and splendid city from destruction, and sent proposals to the garrison of the citadel for a surrender on terms sufficiently moderate and humane. But these were not immediately embraced, as the garrison expected a relief; and the Roman general, apprehensive of that issue, was reluctantly compelled to use the rights of a conquerer, and abandon the city to the plunder of the soldiery. Still, however, his clemency was conspicuous, for he left the gates open for the escape of all who chose to save their lives by flight. It had been happy if Archimedes had availed himself of this permission; but the philosopher was busy in his closet with a geometrical demonstration, when a soldier, plundering his house, killed him on the spot. Marcellus erected a monument to his memory, and took a humane and generous charge of all his kindred.

The kingdom of Syracuse was now added to the Roman province in Sicily, which already comprehended the greater part of that island.

While the war in Italy against the troops of Hannibal was in the meantime successfully spun out to their destruction, by the great Fabius, the younger Scipio, who had succeeded his father as pro-consul in

Spain, accomplished the reduction of that peninsula. The taking of Carthagena (Carthago nova) was a fatal blow to the enemy. It was the most opulent of their foreign ports, and the Romans found there, besides great treasures, an immense magazine of military stores, which had been lodged there as in a depot for the conquest of Italy.

Meantime, Asdrubal had passed the Alps, with a powerful army, to the assistance of his brother Hannibal. But the consul Claudius Nero, coming upon him by surprise in a disadvantageous situation, into which he had been led by the treachery of his guides, engaged and entirely defeated him. Asdrubal was killed in battle, and Claudius, marching to meet Hannibal, gave him the first intelligence of the defeat by throwing his brother's head into his camp. This Carthaginian officer, though thus unfortunate, had a very high character as a general. Had Asdrubal been successful in this engagement, and effected a junction with his brother, it is extremely probable that everything must have given way before them in Italy. But the defeat of that great army and the death of their leader, threw the gloom of despondency on all the prospects of Hannibal, and gave new life and courage to the Romans.

Scipio, triumphant in Spain, now passed into Africa, and carried havoc and devastation even to the gates of Carthage. Alarmed for the fate of their empire, the Carthaginians recalled Hannibal from Italy, where of late he had made no progress. The battle of Zama, in Africa, decided the fate of the war. Twenty thousand Carthaginians were slain in the field, and an equal number taken prisoners. The loss of the Romans did not exceed two thousand. Hannibal himself with difficulty escaped from the field, and arriving at Carthage, represented affairs in so desperate a point of view, that it was immediately resolved to sue for peace. It was granted by Scipio on these conditions—that the Carthaginians should abandon Spain

and Sicily, together with all the islands lying between Italy and Africa; that they should make restitution of all prisoners and deserters, give up all their ships, except ten galleys, and pay, within the term of fifty years, ten thousand talents; and, lastly, that they should undertake no war without consent of the Romans. Such was the conclusion of the second Punic war, ended thus gloriously for Rome, and most honourably for Publius Scipio, to whom his country decreed a splendid triumph, distinguishing him ever afterward by the surname of Africanus.

Everything now concurred to swell the pride of the Romans and to extend their power. A vast increase of wealth had flowed into Rome from the late conquests. Their recent continued victories, and the plunder they derived from them, inflamed their appetite for fresh acquisitions. It was no longer that petty nation occupying a part of Italy whom we have seen for centuries waging a significant war with the tribes which surrounded them; it was a people which began to aspire at the sovereignty of the world.

In this disposition it was not surprising that they should eagerly embrace every opportunity which offered of extending their conquests. We have seen, in treating of the last period of the Grecian history, that Philip II. of Macedon, harassed the Greek states with frequent attacks upon their territories. They complained to the Romans, who immediately declared war against the Macedonian. Philip was defeated, and was glad to purchase a peace by paying a thousand talents, and giving his son Demetrius as a hostage.

The kingdom of Syria was, at this time, the most powerful branch of the empire of Alexander; but ruined in its domestic policy by the foolish wars of the princes of the family of Seleucus, it was in a state of disorder and anarchy. Antiochus, the prince on the throne, had provoked the indignation of the Romans by opposing their arms in Greece, and giving an asy-

lum to Hannibal, then an exile from Carthage. Antiochus was defeated near Thermopylæ, and pursued by the two Scipios into his own kingdom of Syria, where, after various losses, he was reduced to the necessity of concluding a peace on the most humiliating terms. He agreed to pay fifteen thousand talents as the expenses of the war, to abandon all his possessions in Europe, and to cede to the Romans the whole of Asia to the west of Taurus, that is, the whole country from the borders of Mesopotamia and Armenia to the Ægean Sea. The Romans, with much meanness, demanded as another condition, that Antiochus should give up Hannibal into their hands; but the Carthaginian had made his escape on the first intelligence that a treaty was in agitation. The younger Scipio (Lucius) was honoured on this occasion with the surname of Asiaticus, as his elder brother Publius had gained that of Africanus.

These Asiatic conquests were, in a moral point of view, much more prejudicial than advantageous to the Romans. Their simple and austere manners began gradually to relax, and they acquired a relish for luxurious enjoyments. This change in the manners of his countrymen roused the virtuous indignation of Cato the censor, the determined enemy of every species of luxury and corruption. At the time when Hannibal was ravaging Italy, and when the Roman state had the strongest motive to retrench all superfluous expenses, a sumptuary statute called the Oppian law was passed, which prohibited the women from the use of gold in their ornaments, unless the quantity of half an ounce, and from wearing garments of different colours, and likewise interdicted the use of chariots. At the end of the second Punic war the Roman ladies used all their influence to have this law repealed, urging that the motive for its enactment no longer existed. So earnest were they in their purpose, that, forgetting that modest reserve which is their sex's highest ornament, they rushed

out into the streets, and besetting every avenue to the forum, laid hold of the men as they passed, and endeavoured both by clamour and by blandishments to engage their votes for the abrogation of this odious statute. It was no wonder that the rigid virtue of old Cato, then consul, was inflamed with indignation at this spectacle. He poured forth an animated oration on the occasion, but in a tone of keen irony which the greater part of his auditors judged too severe; for the obnoxious law was repealed by a majority of suffrages.

Much more justifiable on this occasion was the severity of Cato than on another which occurred soon after. He incited two of the tribunes, the Petitii, to bring a formal accusation against Scipio Africanus, as guilty of peculation in converting large sums gained in his foreign conquests to his own instead of the public use. The behaviour of Scipio on this occasion was consonant to the magnanimity of his character. On the first day of his citation before the assembly of the people, when his accusation was read, appearing not to have listened to it, he entered into an ample detail of all the illustrious services he had rendered his country. His accusers made no reply, not daring to controvert a single word which he had uttered; but contented themselves with adjourning the assembly to the next day. On the morrow, while an immense multitude crowded the forum, Scipio pressed forward to the tribunal, and making a signal for silence, "My countrymen," said he, "it was on this very day that I fought bravely for you against Hannibal and the Carthaginians in the field of Zama, and gained a glorious victory. Is it thus you celebrate that anniversary? Come, let us repair instantly to the capitol, and give our solemn thanks to all the gods for the republic preserved through my means." With one universal acclamation, the whole multitude followed him while he led the way to the temple of Jupiter—and the tribunes were left alone in the forum. They persisted,

however, in appointing a third day for the trial; but Scipio paid no regard to the summons, and the tribunes themselves, either ashamed of their conduct or convinced that the trial must terminate to their own disadvantage and an increase of honour to the accused, thought proper to drop the prosecution. The illustrious Africanus died soon after, in peaceful retirement at his country-seat of Linternum.

There is perhaps no stronger testimony to the simplicity and integrity of this great man than what is recorded of him by Cicero, that when in the country and free from the cares of public life, he could amuse himself even with the pastimes of children. In the second book, *De Oratore*, is this beautiful passage: "I have been often told," says Crassus, "by my father-in-law, that his kinsman Lælius and the great Scipio were frequently wont to fly from the bustle of the town to a quiet retreat in the country, and there to employ themselves in sports that were childish to a degree beyond all belief. Nay, though I should hardly venture to tell it of such men, yet Scævola assured me that when they were at Cajeta and on the banks of the Lucrine, they were wont to pass their time in gathering shells and pebbles on the shore, and in every sort of frolic and amusement, just as the little birds fly about in wanton circles when they have finished the task of building their nests and providing for their young."* Why should Cicero feel ashamed, or apol-

* Sæpe ex socero meo audivi, cum is diceret, socerum suum Lælium semper ferè cum Scipione solitum rusticari: eosque incredibiliter repuerascere esse solitos, cùm rus ex urbe tanquam ex vinculis evolavissent. Non audeo dicere de talibus viris, sed tamen ita solet narrare Scævola, conchas eos et umbilicos ad Cajetam et ad Lucrinum legere consuesse, et ad omnem animi remissionem ludumque descendere. Sic enim se res habet; ut quemadmodum volucres videmus procreationis atque utilitatis suæ causa fingere et construere nidos; easdem autem, cum aliquid effecerint, lævandi laboris sui causa, passim ac liberè solutas opere volitare: &c.—*Cic. de Oratore*, lib. ii. c. 6.

ogize for mentioning this anecdote, which in reality does so much honour to the persons of whom it is recorded? No force of words, no pompous eulogium, could convey to us so just an idea, so convincing a proof, of the virtuous simplicity of those men or the probity of their minds, as this beautiful picture. The man who feels the stings of an evil conscience, whose soul is a prey to the turbulent passions of avarice or criminal ambition, can never thus taste pleasure in the sports of innocence. He will seek to drown the reflections of his mind in violent gratifications, and in the intoxication of sensual enjoyments. Seneca has added his testimony to the virtues of the great Scipio in these words: "I write this letter from Linternum, the villa of Scipio Africanus; I reverence his shade, and pay my veneration to that little altar which I have erected to his memory on the very spot where, as I conjecture, he lies buried. His soul, I am confident, has returned to that heaven from which it came."*

The younger Scipio (Asiaticus) was soon after impeached for the same crime which had been matter of accusation against his brother. The tribunes, it seems, were determined to have at least one victim from that illustrious house of the Cornelii. He was condemned to pay a heavy fine, as is generally believed, upon false evidence; for when his whole property was seized, his poverty disproved the calumnious accusation, and the senate decreed him a high recompense for the injury he had sustained.

In these instances, the zeal of Cato, though doubtless proceeding from a virtuous motive, was carried to a most blameable excess. The only apology that can be made for it is the shocking profligacy of manners

* In ipsa Scipionis Africani villa jacens, hæc scribo; adoratis ejus manibus et aræ, quam Sepulchrum esse tanti viri suspicor. Animum quidem ejus in cœlum, ex quo erat, rediisse persuadeo mihi.—*Senec.* Epist. 86.

of which his own times furnished a striking example in that society which was known by the name of the *Bacchanalian*. Under the pretence of a religious institution in honour of Bacchus, a vast number, of both sexes and of all ranks, associated themselves in a mysterious combination bound to secrecy by tremendous oaths. They held their meetings at midnight, five times every month, and promiscuously indulged in every species of debauchery, and even in the commission of the most atrocious crimes: for the youth of either sex whom they trepanned to their abominable purposes, if an unwilling victim, usually paid the forfeit of life. A freed woman, anxious for the safety of her lover, disclosed the mysteries to the consul, Postumius, and to him and to his colleague the senate committed full power to take every necessary measure for the detection and punishment of all concerned in this horrid association, both in Rome and in the other cities of Italy. The number was found to exceed seven thousand. Of these the most guilty were capitally punished; others betook themselves to voluntary banishment; and not a few, from conscious guilt and the terror of punishment, laid violent hands on themselves. The senate passed a solemn decree that henceforward no individual should presume to offer a sacrifice to Bacchus, at which more than five persons assisted, without a previous permission granted by their body in full assembly.*

The attention of Rome was called off from her domestic concerns by the disorders of Macedonia. Perseus, the elder son of Philip II., had poisoned the ear of his father by false accusations of his younger brother Demetrius, who had successfully negotiated a peace with the Romans, and whom he artfully represented as cherishing a design of dethroning his father and supplanting himself in the sovereignty of Mace-

* A very interesting account of these matters is given by Livy, lib. xxxix., c. 8, et seq.

donia. Philip, then in his dotage, listened to these infamous surmises, and cruelly put to death Demetrius by poison. Tortured by remorse, he sunk into profound melancholy, and died a short time after. Among the first acts of the administration of Perseus was an alliance with several of the Grecian states to make war against the Romans. We have already, in treating of the Grecian history, seen the issue of this war in the total defeat of Perseus, who was brought captive to Rome to adorn the triumph of Paulus Æmilius, and in the reduction of Macedonia, which now became a province of the Roman empire.

A few years after this time began the third Punic war, which terminated in the destruction of Carthage. Massinissa, king of Numidia, who at the time of Scipio's great successes in Africa had become the ally of the Romans, was the cause of this war. The Numidians had seized some territories belonging to Carthage; and a war ensued, in which the Carthaginians were much weakened. The son of Massinissa, a barbarian in every sense, slaughtered in cold blood fifty-eight thousand of the Carthaginians after they had laid down their arms. The Romans with great meanness laid hold of that season of calamity to declare war, and their subsequent conduct was equally infamous and disgraceful. The Carthaginians, weakened and dispirited, conscious of their utter inability to withstand this formidable power, made the most humble submission, offering even to acknowledge themselves the subjects of Rome. The senate promised to show them every degree of favour, on condition that they should perform what the consuls required of them, and send three hundred hostages of high rank as a security of that obligation. With natural reluctance, but unsuspicious of treachery, they gave this great pledge, and sent the hostages to Rome. A consular army immediately landed in Africa, and there required, in a solemn manner, that the Carthaginians should give up all the arms and military stores contained in

their magazines. "You are now," said they, "under the protection of the Romans, and have no need of arms." In vain they urged, that they were surrounded by enemies, and needed them for their defence. All remonstrance was ineffectual, and they were obliged to submit. The most infernal treachery followed. Bereft of arms, the Carthaginians were in no condition to refuse whatever terms should be proposed. They sent deputies to the Roman camp, to know what had been the determination of the senate with regard to their fate. They were now informed by the consul that it was finally resolved that they should abandon their city, which the senate had decreed should be rased to its foundations; but that they were to be allowed to build on any other part of their territory, provided it was at ten miles' distance from the sea. The amazement and affliction with which these orders were received, are not to be described. The deputies threw themselves upon the ground, shed tears like children, and endeavoured by every motive of compassion and argument of reason to prevail on the consul to depart from this inhuman resolution. But all was in vain. The deputies were ordered instantly to return to Carthage, and to intimate the final determination of the Romans, and the necessity for an immediate compliance.

Despair and phrensy seized the inhabitants of the city upon this fatal intelligence. They prepared for a frantic exertion of resistance, unanimously resolved that death only should separate them from the temples and altars of their gods, the dwellings of their fathers, and the lands of their nativity. Orders were immediately given to barricade the gates of the city; every hand was active in preparation for defence. Arms were formed from every material which could supply them; the women parted with their ornaments of precious metal, and even cut off their hair to form bow-strings. The temples and palaces of the city were turned into work-houses for the fabrication of

military engines; the men worked night and day without intermission, the women bringing their victuals at stated hours, and assisting themselves in every labour to which their strength was equal. The Romans now found that they had to do with a people who would defend themselves to the last extremity.

Asdrubal, the nephew of Hannibal, whom the Carthaginians had imprisoned for insulting the Romans, was now called to take the chief command of the forces of his country; and in a desperate engagement he would have cut to pieces the Roman army, had it not been for a masterly stroke of Scipio Emilianus,* who covered their retreat while they fled across the river. The merit of Scipio was so conspicuous on this occasion, that at Rome he was unanimously chosen consul, though he was but thirty-seven years of age, and the age required by law for that high office was forty-three. He was likewise invested with the sole command of the African war; a charge which he soon fulfilled by reducing the Carthaginians to such extremity that they offered to submit to any conditions, provided only their city might be preserved. But this condition Scipio had it not in his power to grant. In a strong assault on one of the gates, he broke it down, and entering with a large force penetrated to the citadel, which held out a siege of several days, while the Romans were in possession of the town. At length it was surrendered. Scipio, unwilling to destroy this proud and splendid capital, sent to Rome for farther orders. But these contained no mercy for Carthage. The city was set fire to in many different quarters. Pillage, carnage, and desolation ensued. The conflagration lasted for seventeen days. At the recital of a scene of this kind, it is impossible to restrain our indignation, and not to execrate that barbarous policy which prescribes a conduct so contrary to every worthy feel

* The son of Emilius Paulus, and, by adoption, the grandson of Scipio Africanus.

ing of the human mind. Thus ended the ill-fated Carthage, in the 607th year from the building of Rome, and the 146th before the Christian era.

The same year was remarkable for the destruction of Corinth, and the entire extinction of the liberties of Greece. It had for some time been the policy of the Romans to keep up divisions among the different states, and thus artfully to substitute themselves as umpires in their quarrels, or excite them to weaken and destroy each other. The Achaians, as we have seen, furnished the chief obstacle to the accomplishment of their design, and obliged them to resort to force in order to reduce them to submission. Metellus, the prætor, began the war, which was terminated by Mummius, the consul, who took Corinth by storm and utterly destroyed it. Greece was immediately afterward reduced to a Roman province, under the name of Achaia.

This was the era of the commencement of a taste for the fine arts at Rome, to which the knowledge of Asiatic luxuries had successfully paved the way. "How happy for mankind," says Abbé Millot, "could a nation be distinguished at once for its virtue and its refinement, and become polished and enlightened while it retained a purity of morals!" But this is a beautiful impossibility.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER I.

Sedition of the Gracchi—Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi—Criminal ambition of Jugurtha—the Romans declare war against him under Metellus and Marius—Death of Jugurtha—Invasion of the Cimbri—Progress of corruption in the republic—Livius Drusus's projects of reform—The Social War—Origin of the Civil War—Rivalship of Marius and Sylla—War with Mithridates—Marius and Cinna—Sylla obtains absolute authority—His proscriptions—His salutary reforms—He resigns the dictatorship—Lepidus defeated and slain—Pompey distinguishes himself—Lucullus's war against Mithridates—He is superseded by Pompey—Conspiracy of Catiline—Extent of the design—Punishment of the Conspirators—Catiline is killed in battle—Ambitious designs of Julius Cæsar—First Triumvirate—Agrarian Law—Cæsar's increase of power—His design for the removal of Cicero—Cicero's pusillanimous conduct—He goes into exile—His estates confiscated—Cæsar's military exploits in Gaul—Pompey procures the recall of Cicero—Death of Crassus, and rivalship of Pompey and Cæsar.

The Romans, as we have seen, had now, within the period of a very few years, accomplished the total destruction of the Carthaginian empire, the most formidable rival of their power, and had added to their own dominion Spain, Sicily, Macedonia, Greece, and a large portion of Asia. These immense conquests, while they aggrandized the Roman name, and diffused the terror of their arms over a great part of the globe, introduced at home that corruption which is the consequence of wealth, and that luxury which consumes the patriotic spirit. Disorders now arose in the com-

commonwealth which undermined its constitution, and ultimately, and even by rapid steps, accomplished its destruction.

At this period arose Tiberius and Caius Gracchus—two brothers, of plebeian blood by their father's side, but ennobled by civic honours—and on their mother's side, by descent from the illustrious Scipio Africanus. Their mother, Cornelia, was wont to stimulate their ambition by this generous reproach: "Why, my sons, must I ever be called the daughter of Scipio, rather than the mother of the Gracchi?" Tiberius, the elder, had borne the charge of quæstor in Spain; and, being called to account with great severity by the senate upon his return, he conceived a high animosity against that body, and a strong predilection in favour of the popular interest in the state. On that side, he conceived, lay his path of ambition; and the corruptions in the higher order, from their overgrown fortunes, contrasted with the indigence and hardships of the lower class, afforded a plausible, and in some measure a just pretence for a corrective of that inequality.

Tiberius possessed every accomplishment for a popular leader; a bold and intrepid mind, inflexible perseverance, and a nervous and copious elocution. An enthusiast by nature, it is not improbable, however warped by prejudice, that he had actually persuaded himself that his views were virtuous and patriotic. Being elected a tribune of the people, his first measure was to propose the revival of an ancient statute, the Licinian law, which prohibited any Roman citizen from possessing above five hundred jugera, or about two hundred and sixty acres of land. To conciliate the rich to this restitution, the superfluous land in their possession was to be paid for at a just price, from the treasury of the state, and distributed in certain proportions to the poor. The patricians, as might have been expected, opposed this measure with keen and indignant zeal; and, according to their customary

policy, gained over to their side Octavius, one of the tribunes, and by this means secured a *veto*. The proposition would otherwise have been carried by a great majority in the assembly of the tribes. Tiberius, enraged at this disappointment, now adopted a measure equally violent and unconstitutional. The *veto* of the tribunes, which was the surest guard of the popular interest, had ever been respected as a sacred authority. Tiberius was resolved to render it vain and nugatory. He immediately proposed that Octavius should be deprived of his tribuneship. It was in vain that every sound patriot saw the illegality of this proposal, and remonstrated against it as fatal to the constitution. Octavius was deposed by a majority of suffrages, and the revival of the Licinian law was carried with a triumphant hand.

Stimulated by this first success, the zeal of Tiberius now meditated another blow against the aristocracy. He procured a law to be passed, which decreed that the treasures bequeathed to the republic by Attalus, king of Pergamus, and which the senate had hitherto administered for state purposes, should be fairly accounted for, and distributed among the poorer citizens; and, as the term of his own tribunate was about to expire, he solicited to be continued in the office for another year, that he might bring to a conclusion his important plan of reform.

Even the people themselves, who had hitherto supported him, were aware of the illegality of this measure, which tended directly to establish an arbitrary authority in the state, without limitation of period. On the day of election, the assembly was ill attended, and the first tribes which were called to vote gave their suffrage against Tiberius. His friends adjourned the assembly till next day; and in the interval, Tiberius, with his children, walked the streets in mourning, requesting protection from the people against the designs of the patricians, who, as he said, threatened his life. On the following day, a tumult arose in the

assembly of the people, between the opposite parties. The senators broke up their meeting, and repaired in a body to the forum, followed by an immense crowd of the young patricians armed with clubs and staves. Tiberius, apprehensive of his danger, endeavoured to escape with precipitation, his friends following his example; but falling down in the throng, he was assailed by many hands, and slain upon the spot. About three hundred of his followers met with the same fate, and their dead bodies were flung into the Tiber.

Whether the views of Tiberius Gracchus were truly disinterested, and the result of real though misguided patriotism, or whether a criminal ambition was their motive, as his opponents strongly reported, is a question which cannot be with certainty resolved. A strong presumption against him arises from this circumstance, that his brother-in-law, Scipio Æmilianus, and his cousin Scipio Nasica, who was actually instrumental in his death, were of the latter opinion. Scipio Æmilianus, a man of strict virtue and enlightened patriotism, exerted all his powers to quell those dissensions between the senate and people, which he saw carrying the Licinian law into execution would inevitably tend to exasperate to the hazard of all civil order. The consequence of his generous endeavours was, that he was found dead in his bed.

Some years afterward, Caius Gracchus, unintimidated by his brother's fate, pursued the same steps which had brought him to destruction. Being elected tribune, he took every measure for a strict enforcement of the Licinian law, which had hitherto been executed with great remissness. He procured the revival of an obsolete statute, which prohibited the capital punishment of any citizen without the concurring sanction of the senate and people; and with the view of extending his popularity beyond the bounds of Rome, he proposed a law by which the right of citizenship should be conferred on all the inhabitants of the Roman territories within the bounds

of Italy; with an additional enactment, that whoever claimed the right of citizen, if cast by the censors, might appeal to the popular assembly.

These measures, as may be supposed, gave great disgust to the aristocracy, who, it is plain, were at this time the real supporters of the Roman constitution. But the measure which above every other tended to exasperate the senators against Caius, was an inquiry which he set on foot into the corruptions of their body, in which he so far prevailed, that a law was passed depriving that assembly of all concern in the administration of justice, and declaring that in future the civil judges should be exclusively chosen from the order of knights; an act which the senate justly regarded not only as a deep insult to their body, but as a fatal blow to the constitution of the state.

In the view of counteracting these most dangerous innovations, and of undermining the power of the demagogue, the party of the senate and patricians set up Livius Drusus, a young man of uncommon abilities, for whom they procured the office of tribune, and instructed him to supplant the influence of Caius by affecting a still more ardent zeal for the popular interest. They despatched Caius at the same time on a mission to Africa to rebuild the city of Carthage. His absence diminished the number of his partisans and increased those of Livius. At his return, he thought to regain his ground by soliciting a renewed appointment to the tribunate, but was mortified by a rejection of his pretensions. Opimius, a man whom he knew to be his determined enemy, was elected to the consulate, and everything tended to convince him that his popularity was fast declining. It is said that his mother, Cornelia, warned him in passionate terms to escape, by a change of conduct, the fate of his elder brother; but he was deaf to her remonstrances. In a meeting of the comitia, his partisans having come armed to the forum, a tumult ensued, in which one of them stabbed a lictor of the consul with

his poniard; a most furious conflict followed, in which Caius Gracchus, together with about three thousand of the popular party, were massacred in the streets of Rome.

Such was the fate of the Gracchi, men endowed by nature with those talents which, properly directed, might have conduced to the happiness and aggrandizement of their country; but either the victims of a criminal ambition, or precipitated by an intemperance of zeal into measures subversive of all civil order, they perished as the disturbers of the public peace.

There is no female character on whom the ancient writers have lavished more praise than on Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, of whose greatness of mind under the severest misfortunes they speak in terms of the highest eulogy. She had seen the funerals of twelve of her children, the last of whom were Tiberius and Caius Gracchus. While her friends were lamenting her misfortunes, "Call not me unfortunate," said she; "I shall never cease to think myself a happy woman, who have been the mother of the Gracchi."* Imprudent and dangerous for themselves as she must have thought the conduct of her sons, she most naturally deemed it the result of real virtue and patriotism. Plutarch informs us that she spent the remaining years of her life in a villa near Misenum, visited, respected, and beloved by the most eminent men, both Greeks and Romans, and honoured by interchanging presents even with foreign princes. Her conversation was delightful when she recounted anecdotes of her father Africanus; but all were astonished when she spoke freely of her sons, of their

* "Cornelia duodecim partûs totidem funeribus recognovit; et de cæteris facile est, quos nec editos nec amissos civitas sensit. Tiberium et Caium Gracchum, quos etiam qui bonus viros negaverit, magnos fatebitur, et occisos vidit et insepultos. Consolantibus tamen, miseramque dicentibus, nunquam, inquit, non felicem me dicam quæ Gracchos peperi."—*Senec. Consol. ad Marc.*, c. 16.

great deeds and their untimely fate, and this without ever shedding a tear. "It was thought by some," continues Plutarch, "that the pressure of age and misfortune had deadened her maternal feelings: but they," he adds, "who were of that weak opinion, were ignorant that a superior mind, enlightened by a liberal education, can rise above all the calamities of life; and that though fortune may sometimes oppress virtue, she cannot deprive her of that serenity and resolution which never forsake her in the day of adversity."

The universal corruption that now prevailed at Rome was in nothing more conspicuous than in a celebrated event which happened at this time. The old king Massinissa, whom we have mentioned as an ally of the Romans at the time of the first invasion of Africa by Scipio, left three sons who jointly governed Numidia; till, by the death of his brothers, Micipsa remained sole master of the kingdom. This prince, though he had two sons, Adherbal and Hiempsal, adopted his nephew Jugurtha, a young man of promising talents, whose friendship he weakly thought to secure for his cousins by giving him an equal share with them of his dominions. No sooner was Micipsa dead, than this ungrateful youth resolved to attain an undivided empire by putting them to death. Hiempsal was his first victim; and Adherbal, dreading a similar fate, betook himself to Rome, to sue for justice and to entreat the aid and protection of the Romans, to whom his father had rendered his kingdom tributary. But the money of Jugurtha had been beforehand with him. He had bribed to his interest a sufficient party in the senate to procure a reference to ten commissioners, who were sent into Africa with plenary powers to decide between the contending parties. These, by similar policy, the traitor won to his interest; so that they declared him innocent of the charge, and decreed to him the sovereignty of one-half of Numidia. Jugurtha now pursued his schemes

for the destruction of Adherbal, and, openly declaring war, besieged him in the town of Cirtha. The Romans sent their deputies to put a stop to such culpable proceedings; but these, like the former commissioners, were not proof against corruption. Adherbal was obliged to capitulate and throw himself on the mercy of Jugurtha, by whom he was immediately put to death.

These flagrant enormities, which called loud for vengeance, continued yet to meet with shameful palliation in the Roman senate; but the Roman people were not bribed; and their cries for justice at length compelled the rulers of the republic to declare war against Jugurtha. In the interval of a truce, this traitor appeared in person at Rome, and had the confidence to justify his proceedings in full senate; where, as before, he had so lavishly bestowed his money as to insure his acquittal. A continuance, however, of the same conduct excited at length the utmost indignation of the Romans, and Metellus, the consul, was sent against him, at the head of a large army.

Metellus chose for his lieutenant the celebrated Marius, a man of mean birth, who possessed great military talents and the utmost personal intrepidity, but with a total want of every generous and virtuous principle. Instigated by ambition, and bound by no ties of gratitude to the man who had raised him from obscurity, he sought leave to go to Rome, and there represented the conduct of Metellus in so unfavourable a point of view, and talked so plausibly of what he could himself have done in the same situation, that he gained the people to his interest, was elected to the consulate, and obtained the charge of prosecuting the war against Jugurtha. Metellus, though in the train of success, being thus superseded, returned to Rome, where a just sense of his services prevailed over every injurious impression, and he was decreed the honour of a triumph.

But Marius, with all his military abilities, was

obliged to employ treachery to finish the Jugurthan war. The perfidious character of Jugurtha justified, as he thought, a similar policy in his enemy. Sylla, then acting as quæstor to Marius, seduced Bocchus, king of Mauritania, the father-in-law of Jugurtha, from his alliance; and that prince, to purchase peace with the Romans, delivered up Jugurtha into their hands. He was brought to Rome in chains, and, after gracing the triumph of Marius, was thrown into a dungeon and starved to death.

The Romans were at this time under a serious alarm from the barbarous nations, who, pouring down from the northern parts of Europe, suddenly made their appearance in a countless host even upon the frontiers of Italy. This horde of savages, who were said to amount to more than three hundred thousand men in arms, attended with their women, children, and cattle, were known by the name of Cimbri; but there is no certainty of the precise country from which they migrated. The consul Papirius Carbo was despatched to Illyricum to oppose their progress, but with inadequate force; for they overwhelmed his army like a tempest. They fought in a dense and solid mass, of which the foremost ranks were chained together by their girdles. Had this torrent forced its way across the Rhætian Alps into Italy, it is hard to say what might have been the fate of the Roman empire; but fortunately they chose a different course, and dissipated the alarm for a time by passing onward through the southern Gaul to the vicinity of the Pyrenees.

The diversion of the barbarous Cimbri to the quarter of Spain gave only a temporary respite to the Roman arms. They began to overrun the Roman province in Gaul in separate large bodies, passing from the southward to the neighbourhood of the Rhine and the banks of the Danube. In one large body, they poured down by the passes of Carinthia, or the valley of Trent, to join another detachment on the

banks of the Po. Marius, now in his fourth consulate, had for his special department the province of Gaul, and consequently the charge of opposing these invaders, who, from the cautious movements of the Roman army, now began to insult them as a dastardly foe that durst not meet them in the field. Marius signally displayed his talents as a general by attacking these separate divisions, while they had spread themselves over the country, intent solely on ravage and plunder. In one campaign two hundred thousand of the barbarians were slain in the field, and ninety thousand taken prisoners, among whom was Teutobocchus, one of their kings. In another engagement on the Po, the remainder of this savage horde was entirely destroyed. The popularity of Marius from this great success procured his election to the consulate for the fifth time, and the honours of a triumph.

The plunder of Jugurtha's kingdom brought a new accession of wealth to the Romans. They now found not only their ambition gratified by their extensive conquests, but their appetite for luxury, which was daily increasing. We have seen its effects in that shameful corruption of the senate, the highest order, and the natural guardians of the virtue of the republic. Yet even this was but the dawning of that profligacy of manners and of principle, which, from this period, we shall see pervaded all ranks of the state. The annals of the Roman republic now become only the history of the leaders of different factions, who assuage their avarice, their ambition, and revenge in the blood of their fellow-citizens.

Livius Drusus, as tribune of the people, involved the republic in a war with the allied states, which was a prelude to those civil wars which ended in its destruction. This tribune renewed the project of Caius Gracchus for extending to the allies the rights of citizenship. The proposition was violently combated; the allies contend that as they paid their taxes to the

state, and supplied in war a great proportion of the legions, it was but just they should share the privileges of the republic as well as its burdens. On the other hand, to multiply to so vast an extent the popular votes in the Comitia, and thus extend the field of corruption and the empire of tumult in all the public proceedings, appeared to involve the most ruinous consequences to the state. The Roman people themselves dreaded the diminution of their influence by this admixture of aliens;* and, in reality, the measure was cordially supported only by the factious and ambitious spirit of the tribunes themselves. In this state of public opinion, the fate of Drusus, who was stabbed by an unknown hand while sitting in his tribunal, excited neither alarm nor regret.

But the allies in Italy were exasperated by the opposition to their claims, and by the murder of their champion. The principal states entered into a secret league for arming in support of their pretensions, while a formal embassy was sent, in their joint name, to demand from the senate and people of Rome what they represented as a matter of right and justice. The senate, apprized of all their preparations, sent a peremptory refusal, and ordered several legions to take the field against them, nominally headed by the consuls, but, in reality, under the command of Marius, Sylla, Pompey, and Crassus, all at that time men of the highest military reputation. But even under these able generals, the success of the allies in many severe conflicts was such, that the senate thought it prudent to listen to terms, and to allow the privilege of citizenship to the inhabitants of such of the states as should lay down their arms and return to submission and allegiance. These concessions dissolved the

* The number of Roman citizens, which, at the time of the census made by Servius Tullius, amounted only to eighty-three thousand, had increased, at the commencement of the Social war, to four hundred and sixty-three thousand men capable of bearing arms.—*Beaufort, Rep. Rom.* l. iv. c. 4.

eague, and the new citizens found, after all, that their coveted privileges were of very little consequence. The senate and censors formed them into eight new tribes, who in the Comitia were to give their votes last, which reduced their influence to a mere trifle.

This war between Rome and her allies, thence termed the Social war, was an easy preparative for that which followed between her own citizens. To excite a civil war was, in the present situation of things, a matter of no great difficulty. It was only necessary that there should be two rivals in the path of ambition equally able and equally intrepid; and such men were Marius and Sylla. The former, we have seen, had raised himself from obscurity by the mere force of talents. Sylla was of an illustrious family; he had all the talents of his rival, and yet more unbounded ambition; his manners were engaging; he had acquired immense wealth, and he knew how to employ it with great judgment in rendering himself popular. His distinguished military conduct in the Social war increased the public favour; and he was elected consul, with the charge of prosecuting a war in Asia against Mithridates, king of Pontus.

This prince had given the Romans the highest provocation. By the seizure of Bythnia and Cappadocia; he had encroached on the tributary states of the republic; he had seized a large part of Greece—and, by his fleet in the Ægean sea, had taken several ships belonging to the Romans. He had likewise authorized a general massacre, in one day, of every Roman citizen in the lesser Asia. No sooner, however, had Sylla taken the field, than the intrigues of his rival Marius, and of Sulpitius, a tribune of the people who had devoted himself to the interest of Marius, procured his recall while still within the limits of Italy. He learned at the same time that some of his kindred had been murdered at Rome by the party of his enemies, and suspected that a similar fate was intended for himself. It was necessary, therefore, to

form a bold and decisive resolution. His army, warmly attached to their leader, had received the order for his recall with high indignation. In an animated speech to his troops, he reminded them of the honours they had won under his command, and exposed in strong terms the malicious and sanguinary designs of his rival, and the danger which such proceedings threatened to the commonwealth itself. He found the army disposed to implicit obedience to his commands, and he boldly proposed to lead them on to Rome. "Let us go," said they, with one voice; "lead us on to avenge the cause of oppressed liberty." Sylla accordingly led them on, and they entered Rome sword in hand. Marius and Sulpitius fled with precipitation from the city. Sylla restrained his army from committing any outrage, and then, with great deliberation and without a shadow of opposition, proceeded to annul all the laws and ordinances which had passed during the administration of his rival. The senate, at his instigation, then pronounced a decree which proscribed Marius and Sulpitius as enemies of their country, whom all persons were required to pursue and put to death. The consequence was, that the head of Sulpitius was soon after sent to Rome. Marius, alone and a fugitive, was taken in the marshes of Minturna, where he had sought concealment by plunging himself up to the chin in water. He was was suffered to escape and got over into Africa; where being still persecuted, and required by the Roman governor to depart from the province, "Go," said he to the messenger "and tell thy master that thou hast seen Marius sitting amid the ruins of Carthage." Plutarch, who relates this anecdote, says that Marius meant by it to claim the compassion of the Roman prætor, by drawing this comparison between his own lot and that of the fallen Carthage; both striking examples of the instability of fortune. Marius then retired with his son to a small island on the African coast, where he soon after received intelligence that a

strong party had been formed at Rome in his favour, where Cinna, one of his firmest friends and partisans, had been elected to the consulate.

One of the first measures of the new consul was to impeach Sylla before the assembly of the people. It was a law of the state, that any man invested with a military command might frustrate any charge brought against him by going on service. Sylla, therefore, defeated the purpose of his rivals, by repairing immediately to his army, and commencing the campaign against Mithridates.

His partisans at Rome, in the meantime, took advantage of a series of violent and illegal proceedings of Cinna, to procure his deposition from office, and his repulsion from the city. Marius, returning to Italy at this juncture, found means to levy a considerable army, and joining his forces to those of Cinna, they laid siege to Rome, at that time reduced to great distress by famine. In this situation, the senate capitulated with these traitors in arms, repealed the attainder of Marius, and restored Cinna to his consular function. They entered the city triumphantly at the head of the army, and immediately gave orders for a general massacre of all those citizens whom they regarded as their enemies. The scene was horrible beyond all description. The heads of the senators, streaming with blood, were stuck up before the *rostra*, "a dumb senate," says an ancient writer, "but which yet cried aloud to Heaven for vengeance." At the succeeding election of magistrates, Marius and Cinna proclaimed themselves consuls, without the formality of a vote of the people; but the mind of Marius, ever the prey of turbulent passions, which he sought to allay by intemperate drinking, fell a victim to their joint efforts, and he died, as is said, in a fit of debauch.

Sylla, in the meantime, with the army, had contributed to the glory of the republic, by putting an end to the war with Mithridates. This very prince had conceived the proud design of wresting all Asia,

together with Greece, from the dominion of the Romans; but the loss of two great battles at Chæronea and Orchomenos put an end to his prospects of ambition, and forced him to conclude an humiliating peace. "Sylla," says Velleius Paterculus, "deserved censure for many things; but one thing was meritorious—he left his private interest neglected till he had finished his war against the enemies of Rome." His own revenge was his real object; and a dreadful revenge it was.

On returning to Rome, he found the consuls Carbo and Norbanus, (for Cinna was now dead,) with above two hundred thousand men in arms, to oppose him; but he was beloved by the soldiers, and he had address enough to seduce a whole consular army, with Cethægus, Verres, and the young Pompey, to join themselves to his party. With this powerful reinforcement, he entirely defeated the consuls, and prepared now to act a part apparently contrary to every former indication of his nature. There cannot be a doubt that murder is a contagious disease; that with the first shedding of blood the nature is infuriated, and the wretch once imbrued in it rushes on with enthusiasm to the most atrocious cruelties. Sylla had now caught the contagion. He ordered six thousand men to be massacred in cold blood, who, on promise of their lives, had laid down their arms. His proscriptions were dreadful beyond all example. Every day produced a new catalogue of those who were doomed to destruction. He declared that he would not spare an enemy whom he had in Italy. The punishment did not stop at the supposed offenders: their family and posterity to the third generation were declared infamous, and incapable of enjoying any office in the state; a proof that tyrranic cruelty is blind to consequences, and suspects not how short-lived, from the very nature of things, its empire must necessarily be. It was amid these horrid scenes that the abandoned Catiline first gratified that profligate and savage disposition which afterward were aimed at the general destruction of the state.

Sylla was now without a rival in authority, and absolute master of the government, which, therefore, properly speaking, was no longer a republic; yet he chose to recur to the popular authority, in order to establish himself in power, and he was nominated in the comitia *dictator for an unlimited space of time.*

He was now secure, and seemed to turn his thoughts to the restoration of order and tranquillity in the state. He restored the senate to its judicial power, of which for a considerable time it had been deprived. He published severe laws against murder and oppression; he regulated the election to the high offices of prætor, quæstor, and tribune; prohibiting, with regard to the last, that any tribunes of the people should be chosen unless from the body of the senators, and enacting that their election to that function should preclude for ever their attaining to a higher dignity. This regulation effectually prevented that once-enviable office from being any longer an object of ambition.

Having made these prudent and salutary reforms, Sylla took another step which excited universal surprise—he resigned the dictatorship. The man who had destroyed above a hundred thousand of his fellow-citizens—who, in the course of his proscriptions, had put to death about ninety senators, and above two thousand six hundred Roman knights—had courage to resign the absolute authority he had acquired, to become a private citizen, and to offer to give an account to the public of his conduct. But he had gained partisans to his interest more powerful, if not so numerous as his enemies. The senate were his friends; because, by his late regulations, he had restored to that body a great part of its ancient dignity, and had ever stood forth the supporter of their order against Marius, who was the champion of the people. The patricians saw with pleasure that they were once more considered as the superior rank in the state. In these respects, Sylla professed himself the friend of the ancient constitution of his country; and as such, in spite of all his atroci-

ties, he has been regarded by the most enlightened historians. He, therefore, had a powerful party who approved of his political conduct; and above all, he was the idol of the army, who had all along profited by his measures, and gained by his indulgence: he had given freedom to ten thousand slaves, and had gratified by rewards all his partisans. These were his guardians, and enabled him to walk with the security of an innocent man in that city which he had deluged with blood. Sylla, however, did not long survive his change of state. Pleasure and debauchery brought on him a nauseous disease, of which he died. He was certainly a man of great strength of mind, and had some of the qualilies of an heroic character; but he lived in evil times, when it was impossible at once to be great and to be virtuous.

On the death of Sylla, the civil war began anew. Lepidus, the consul, aspiring at similar dominion, but a man of no abilities, levied a large army, and, on the pretence of restoring the forfeited estates to those whom Sylla had driven into banishment by his proscriptions, openly proclaimed his purpose of annulling all the late political regulations. The senate justly took the alarm; Catulus and Pompey were invested with authority to provide for the safety of the republic, and immediately taking the field with a superior force, Lepidus sustained two defeats, and took shelter in Sardinia, where he died.

It was now that Pompey began to distinguish himself. He had already, with no other command than as the general of an army, attained to the reputation of possessing great talents by his victories over the Marian party in Africa, Sicily, and Italy. Sertorius was the head of that party in Spain, where his civil and military abilities had gained him the highest popularity. Metellus and Pompey confessed their inability to subdue this formidable partisan in the field, by meanly setting a prize upon his head. This policy was successful; it drew off Perpenna from his inter-

est, who had hitherto supported his cause. The traitor invited his friend to a banquet, and a hired assassin stabbed him amid the tumult of festivity. The party of Sertorius was undone by the death of its leader; and Pompey, returning to Rome, had the honours of a triumph.

Mithridates, king of Pontus, was earnestly bent upon recovering those possessions in Asia of which the Romans had deprived him. Lucullus, a very able general, was intrusted with the conduct of the war against him. He defeated Mithridates in two engagements, and recovered Bithynia. Meantime, Mithridates had sent a fleet to Italy to support the rebellion of Spartacus, who was carrying on war against the republic at the head of forty thousand slaves, and had defeated an army commanded by two prætors, and another headed by both the consuls. This rebellion Pompey had the credit of subduing; although, in fact, the victory which cost Spartacus his life was achieved by Crassus, before Pompey's arrival. In the following year, Pompey and Crassus were elected consuls, and the latter, by his splendid festivals and shows, acquired with the people a high measure of popularity. Lucullus had now compelled Mithridates to retreat to Armenia, and the kingdom of Pontus submitted to the Roman arms.

Lucullus now marched against Mithridates and Tigranes, and had the honour of signally defeating their united forces; but it was his misfortune or his blame to become unpopular with his army, and in the next engagement the Pontic king gained an important victory. The consequence was, that his enemies at Rome accused him of protracting the war from motives of interest. Pompey, who secretly wished to supplant him in his command, procured some of his friends, among whom were Julius Cæsar and Cicero, to propose that he should supersede Lucullus, and a decree was obtained to that effect. When the intelligence was brought to Pompey, he feigned the ut-

most surprise. The rival generals came to an interview in Galatia, which passed in mutual reproaches. "It is your policy," said Lucullus, "to triumph over an enemy whom another has already subdued, and thus to gather laurels which you have not won."—"And you," said Pompey, "covet victory solely for the sake of plunder, and ravage countries only to fill your coffers." Both reproaches had some foundation in truth. Pompey prosecuted the war against Mithridates, and soon compelled his ally Tigranes into terms of unconditional submission. In the following campaign he put an end to the dominion of Mithridates. One of that prince's concubines treacherously surrendered to the Roman general a capital fortress of the kingdom; and Mithridates soon after, seeing his fortunes desperate, had recourse to a voluntary death. Pontus and Syria were then reduced to the condition of provinces of the Roman empire.

On the return of Lucullus to Rome, his acknowledged services procured him the honour of a triumph; and he passed the remainder of his life in luxurious retirement. Fond at the same time of study, and of the conversation of the most ingenious and polite men of his time, he spent whole days with them in his library and gardens, which were open to all the learned men of Rome and Greece.* If anything can be said to vindicate that excess to which he carried the luxury of the table, it is that his higher morals were irreproachable; and voluptuary as he was, he had yet a higher pleasure in acts of humanity and beneficence.

While Pompey was thus employed in Asia, a most dangerous conspiracy threatened the entire destruction of Rome. Lucius Sergius Catilina, we have already observed, had been one of the ministers of the cruelties of Sylla. He was a youth of a noble family, but with a character stained with every manner of

* See Plutarch in Vit. Lucul. who details at considerable length the luxurious life of this celebrated Roman.

crime. While Sylla was dictator, he had risen to considerable honours: he had been quæstor, and had held a command in Africa as prætor; but his vices disgraced these splendid employments, and the wealth which he acquired by rapine and extortion he consumed in the most infamous debaucheries. Foiled in his design of obtaining the consulate for himself and his friend Piso, he first determined to wreak his vengeance on the more successful candidates, Cotta and Torquatus; and this his first conspiracy, which was to begin by the murder of these magistrates and all their partisans among the senate, appears to have failed of success more from the want of concerted measures in the conspirators themselves, than from the vigilance of the sovereign power of the state. The disappointment of this design* served only to stimulate his daring and malignant spirit to enterprises of greater danger and atrocity. Lost in character, drowned in debt, and thence unable to find any other resource for the support of his vices and debaucheries, he now formed the desperate scheme of extirpating the whole body of the senate, of assassinating all the magistrates of the commonwealth, and satiating his avarice and ambition by the command of the republic and the plunder of the city.

Catiline gained to his interest the profligate of all ranks and denominations: knights, patricians, senators, being desperate bankrupts, and some high-born women of intriguing and abandoned character, helped to increase his party. To facilitate the execution of his designs, he once more solicited the consulship, but was again disappointed, from the known infamy of his character. The illustrious Cicero was elected to that office. Happy for the republic that in those perilous times she had this great man for her guardian and protector! He had for his colleague Caius Anto-

* Of this first conspiracy of Catiline, the accounts of the Roman historians are extremely imperfect and confused.

nius, a weak and indolent man, who left to him all the burden, and consequently all the honour, of the administration.

In the meantime, Catiline had brought his plot to maturity. Troops were levied, arms provided, a distinct department and function was assigned to each of the principal conspirators, and a day was fixed for the commencement of operations in the heart of Rome. The city was to be set fire to in a hundred different quarters at once; the consuls were to be assassinated; and an immense list was prepared of the chief citizens who were doomed to instantaneous destruction. A plot of this nature, in which so many were concerned, could not long be kept secret. Fulvia, a woman of loose character, the mistress of one of the conspirators, probably gained by the spies of Cicero, gave notice to the consuls of the whole plan of the conspiracy. The senate passed that powerful decree which armed the consuls with dictatorial authority for the safety of the republic;* and Cicero under this ample warrant might, perhaps, without challenge of exceeding his powers, have seized the traitor, and put him instantly to death. But he wished to discover his numerous accomplices, and thus effectually to extinguish the conspiracy. We are astonished when we read that animated oration of Cicero, the first against Catiline; and know that the traitor had the audacity to sit in the senate-house while it was delivered, and while every man of worth or regard for character deserted the bench on which he sat, and left him a spectacle to the whole assembly. We are equally astonished when we learn that he was suffered still to remain at liberty; nay, to leave Rome and to appear at the head of an army in open rebellion. But it was one peculiarity of the Roman constitution, during the republic, that the laws did not allow the detention of accused persons in order to trial. A citizen accused of whatever crime,

* Dent operam consules ne quid respublica detrimenti capiat

continued at full liberty till judgment was pronounced against him, and might, if he foresaw the issue of the trial, withdraw himself from Rome as a voluntary exile.

A remarkable circumstance, showing the extent of this formidable conspiracy, was now brought to light. The ambassadors of the Allobroges having fruitlessly applied to the Roman senate for a redress of grievances, Publius Lentulus, the prætor, gave them assurance in private of protection and favour, provided they would return to their province, and dispose of their countrymen to arm in support of a powerful party, which, he affirmed, would soon have the command of the republic. Of this negotiation Cicero received intelligence. The consul, with infinite prudence, instructed his informant to encourage the correspondence between Lentulus and the ambassadors, and to urge the latter to demand from Lentulus a list of the names of all his partisans, in order to show to their countrymen the number and power of those friends on whose protection they might depend if they armed in support of this great revolution in the state. Lentulus fell into the snare that was laid for him. He gave a list of the names of all concerned in the conspiracy of Catiline to the ambassadors, who, setting out upon their journey, were waylaid, and their despatches seized by order of the consul. Cicero had now in his hands the most complete evidence against the whole of the conspirators. Assembling the senate, he produced first the written evidence, consisting of letters, under the hands of the chief partisans of Catiline, together with lists of arms, and the places where they were deposited; as well as separate instructions for the ready co-operation of the different leaders in their distinct departments of the plot. The deputies of the Allobroges were produced before the senate and made no scruple to confirm the proof arising from those documents.

It remained for the senate to determine what course

was to be pursued with these detected traitors; and the difference of opinion which prevailed on that subject afforded a strong criterion of the alarming extent of this atrocious design, and the influence of those who secretly favoured it. Silanus, the consul elect, proposed an immediate sentence of death on the whole of the conspirators. His opinion was powerfully combated by Julius Cæsar, who maintained that the confiscation of their estates, and the committal of their persons in charge to some of the best affected of the Italian communities, was as effectual a curb to their designs, and more agreeable to law than a capital punishment. Cicero, without delivering any opinion, painted in strong colours the necessity of an immediate and powerful antidote to prevent the utter ruin of the state, and declared that he would execute the orders of the senate, whatever they should be, at the hazard of his own life. Cato closed the debate by observing, that the vote of that night would seal the fate of Rome, and convince her intestine enemies whether their party or the guardians of the republic were to prevail in this awful conflict. He concluded by voting for the immediate execution of all the conspirators already in custody, and a vigorous effort for the extermination of the rebel and his army then in the field. This opinion prevailed, and was immediately carried into effect. Lentulus and his accomplices were the same day, without form of trial, strangled in prison by the consul's warrant.

An army, headed by Antonius, now took the field against Catiline. He came up with him in the neighbourhood of Fesulæ. The rebel made a desperate defence; but, overpowered by numbers, he threw himself, with frantic courage, into the midst of the enemy, and died a better death than his crimes merited.

Among the many who had incurred some suspicion of sharing in the guilty designs of Catiline was Julius Cæsar. This young man, the son-in-law of Cinna,

was of a most illustrious patrician family. The companions of his youth had known him only as a fop and a debauchee; but pleasure and effeminacy were assumed disguises of a daring and ambitious spirit. Sylla, who was an excellent judge of human nature, had even penetrated into his real character, and numbered him among the proscribed. "There is many a Marius," said he, "in the person of that young man." Cæsar, aware of the dangerous consequences of these suspicions, quitted Rome, and did not return thither till after Sylla's death. He became more circumspect in his conduct, and learned the better to conceal his designs, till the proper opportunity of bringing them into action. Meantime, he courted the people, and was high in their favour before he accepted any office in the state. His largesses had gained a great party to his interest, though they ruined his private fortune; and when he was created Œdile, it was generally believed he was in indigent circumstances; yet the games and spectacles which he exhibited surpassed everything hitherto seen in magnificence.

At the time when Pompey returned from his Asiatic expedition, Cæsar held the office of prætor. The ambitious spirit of Pompey could brook neither a superior nor an equal. Crassus, a man of mean talents, but of a restless and ambitious spirit, had, by means of his enormous wealth, gained a very considerable party to his interest; for money at Rome could always ensure popularity, and thus render even the weakest of men formidable to the liberties of their country. Thus, with the greatest inequality of talents, Pompey and Crassus were rivals in the path of ambition; and Cæsar, who at this time aspired to the consulate, and was well aware that, by courting exclusively either of these rivals, he infallibly made the other his enemy, showed the reach of his political genius by artfully effecting a reconciliation between them, and thus securing the friendship of both. Cato foresaw the fatal consequences of this union of interests, which was

termed the *Triumvirate*, and he openly prognosticated the ruin of the republic. In the meantime, Cæsar, by their joint interest, obtained the consulate, and greatly increased his popularity by procuring a new agrarian law to be passed, which authorized the division of certain lands in Campania among twenty thousand of the poorer citizens, who had at least three children.

It is not a little surprising that a measure of this kind, so contrary to all good policy, should be so frequently proposed and adopted in the Roman commonwealth. On this subject the reflections of Dr. Fergusson are most judicious: "In great and populous cities, indigent citizens are ever likely to be numerous, and would be more so if the idle and profligate were taught to hope for bounties and gratuitous provisions to quiet their clamours and to suppress their disorders. If men were to have estates in the country because they are factious and turbulent in the city, it is evident that public lands, and all the resources of the most prosperous state, would not be sufficient to supply their wants. Commissioners appointed for the distribution of such public favours would be raised above the ordinary magistrates, and above the laws of their country. They might reward their own creatures, and keep the citizens in general in a state of dependance on their will. The authors of such proposals, while they are urging the state and the people to ruin, would be considered as their only patrons and friends. 'It is not the law I dread,' said Cato; 'it is the reward expected for obtaining it.'"* These reflections are so obviously the dictates of good sense, that even the wildest demagogue must admit their force; and hence we are furnished with a just criterion to appreciate the real characters of the proposers of such measures, and to unmask the mock patriotism of such men as Cassius, the Gracchi, and Julius Cæsar.

* Fergusson's Rom. Rep., vol. ii. p. 411. 8vo. edit.

Cæsar, in order to strengthen his interest with Pompey, gave him his daughter in marriage. He had now attained to that height of consideration with the people, that the senate was completely intimidated, and dare not oppose him. A stronger proof cannot be given than the passing of a law by which the senators took a solemn oath not to oppose any measure that should be determined in a popular assembly during his consulate. He gave the government of the provinces to his chief partisans, and took for himself those of Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul and Illyria for five years, together with the command of four legions. The legion consisted at this time of about four thousand men.

Among the men whom Cæsar most dreaded was Cicero. He knew him to be a true patriot, and a real friend of his country and its constitution, and therefore an enemy to all usurpation of a preponderating power in the state.* He therefore beheld in him the greatest obstacle to his own ambitious designs, and resolved to accomplish his ruin. Cicero was aware of his own danger, and therefore had for some time

* The first occasion on which Cicero distinguished himself as an orator was one of great difficulty and delicacy, the defence of Roscius, who, during the time of Sylla's horrible proscriptions, had been robbed of his whole fortune by some of his wicked relations, who had put to death his father under the pretended authority of that proscription, though in reality his name was not in the list of victims. A favourite of Sylla, named Chrysogonus, had shared this infamous plunder, and, to secure his possession, accused the son of being the murderer of his father. Such was, at this time, the dread of offending Sylla, that none of the old advocates or orators would undertake the defence of this injured man. Cicero, then in his twenty-seventh year, nobly stood forth as his defender; and, with admirable skill and address, prevailed in obtaining justice for his client, without incurring the resentment of that man who was the protector of his oppressors. The reputation of the pleader rose from that moment to the highest pitch, and he was regarded as the first orator of the age.

declined all share in the offices of state; while his high character and eminent public services procured him the esteem of every man of virtue. But such were not the prevailing party in the republic, either in point of influence or numbers; for the populace ever bestowed their favour on those who best paid their court, and ministered most largely to their avarice and love of pleasure. Clodius, a mortal enemy of Cicero, was pitched on by Cæsar as his fittest instrument to accomplish the ruin of this illustrious man. By Cæsar's influence, Clodius was chosen one of the tribunes of the people, and was no sooner in office than he proposed various laws which tended to ingratiate himself with the people, and at the same time secure the favour of the chiefs of the republic. He procured the passing of an act for remitting the debts due by the poorer class for corn bought from the public granaries; and another for the restoring and increasing the number of public corporations, which had been abolished on account of the turbulence and faction of which they were the seminaries. He gained much influence with the senate by a regulation for abridging the power of the censors in purging that order; and finally he proposed a law which made it a high offence to condemn or put to death any citizen before he had been judged by the people. This important law was evidently levelled at Cicero, who, by his authority as consul, warranted indeed by a decree of the senate, had condemned Catiline's accomplices to death—a measure which the necessity of the times and the imminent peril of the republic had justified in the opinion of all good men.

Cicero, with all his high qualities, was of a weak and pusillanimous spirit. Instead of manfully endeavouring to avail himself of the great and essential services which he had rendered his country, sufficient to insure him the support of every good citizen, in averting or opposing this adverse current which threatened his destruction, he meanly sunk under the apprehension

of its force. His resolution entirely forsook him. He clothed himself in a mourning habit, as did most of the equestrian order to which he belonged; and he presented himself in the assembly of the people, in the abject character of a suppliant whose life and fortunes were entirely at their disposal. He claimed the friendship of Pompey, to whom he had done essential services; but he shamefully abandoned him. Cato, the real friend of Cicero, and who would have generously supported him at all hazards, was purposely invested with a commission to reduce the island of Cyprus, in order to remove him from Rome at this critical moment when the fate of his friend was in dependance. Before leaving the city, he is said to have counselled Cicero to yield to the necessity of circumstances, and betake himself to voluntary banishment from his ungrateful country.

After some ineffectual endeavours to try the attachment of his former friends, which only ended in fresh mortification, Cicero followed the counsel of Cato. He set off in the middle of the night, and embarked at Brundisium for Macedonia, on his way to Thessalonica, where he had fixed the scene of his exile. Here he betrayed in a lamentable degree the weakness of his mind. The letters which he wrote to Atticus, it has been well observed, "resemble more the wailings of an infant, or the strains of a tragedy composed to draw tears, than the language of a man supporting the cause of integrity in the midst of unmerited trouble."* "I wish I may see the day," he thus writes to his friend, "when I shall be disposed to thank you for having prevented me from resorting to a voluntary death; for I now bitterly regret that I yielded in that matter to your entreaty. What species of misfortune have I not endured? Did ever any one fall from so high a state, in so good a cause, with such abilities and knowledge, and with such a share of the public

* Fergusson's Rom. Rep., vol. ii, p. 448.

esteem? Cut off in such a career of glory, deprived of my fortune, torn from my children, debarred the sight of a brother dearer to me than myself—but my tears will not allow me to proceed." In contemplating such a picture, the historian I have just quoted truly says, "It appears from this and many other scenes of the life of this remarkable man, that though he loved virtuous actions, yet his virtue was accompanied with so unsuitable a thirst of the praise to which it entitled him, that his mind was unable to sustain itself without this foreign assistance; and when the praise to which he aspired for his consulate was changed into obloquy and scorn, he seems to have lost the sense of good or evil in his own conduct and character." How different this conduct from the sentiments he had expressed as a philosopher. in his beautiful treatise *De Finibus*, l. i.: "Succumbere doloribus, eosque humili animo imbecilloque ferre, miserum est: ob eamque debilitatem animi, multi parentes, multi amicos, nonnulli patriam, plerique autem seipsos penitus perdiderunt."* But speculative and practical philosophy are widely different.

Cicero's departure from Rome was regarded as a full justification of that sentence of banishment which Clodius immediately caused to be passed against him as an enemy of the Republic, accompanied with a decree for confiscating his whole estates, and demolishing and razing to the ground his elegant palaces and villas. Such were the rewards of that true patriot whom, a few months before, his country had justly hailed as its preserver from utter destruction! But popular opinion is ever apt to pass from one extreme to another; and the latter part of the life of Cicero was a perpetual alternation of triumph and disgrace.

* "To yield to misfortunes and bear them weakly, is miserable. By such infirmity of mind, many have brought ruin on their relations and friends, some even on their country, but more on themselves."

We have remarked that, in the divisions of the provinces between Cæsar, Pompey, and Crassus, the first of these had for his share those extensive territories on both sides of the Alps, distinguished by the names of Gallia Cisalpina and Transalpina. Of these he obtained the government for five years, and in that period he carried to its highest pitch the military glory of the republic, and his own reputation as a consummate general. The Helvetians, leaving their own territory, had attempted to obtain a settlement within the Roman province. Cæsar, in the first year of his government, utterly defeated these invaders, and drove them back to their native seats with the loss of near two hundred thousand slain in the field. The Germans under Ariovistus, who had attempted a similar invasion, were repelled with immense slaughter, their leader narrowly escaping in a small boat across the Rhine. The Belgæ, the Nervii, the Celtæ, the Suevi, the Menapii, and other warlike nations, were all successively brought under subjection. In the fourth year of his command he invaded Britain. The motive to this enterprise was purely ambition, although the pretext was that the Britains were the aggressors by sending supplies to the hostile tribes of Gaul. Cæsar landed near Deal, and found a much more formidable opposition than he had expected, the natives displaying considerable military skill with the most determined courage. The Romans, indeed, gained some advantages; but Cæsar soon became sensible that the conquest of the island required a much greater force than had yet been brought against it, and was not to be achieved in a single campaign. The approach of winter in the country of an enemy whose spirit seemed to be roused to the most desperate resistance, gave him some alarm for the safety of his army; and, therefore, binding the conquered parts of the country to terms of submission, he thought it prudent to re-embark his legions, and, after settling them in winter-quarters in Gaul, returned himself to Italy, to attend to the concerns of the cap-

:tal, where the splendour of his foreign campaigns had highly increased his popularity.

His great acquisition of fame had now sensibly obscured the glory of Pompey, whose influence was visibly on the decline. To strengthen himself by the interest and by the talents of Cicero, whom he had before so meanly abandoned, he now procured the recall of that illustrious exile, and the repeal of the sentence of confiscation which had deprived him of his whole property. Cicero returned to his country after an absence of sixteen months. His journey from Brundisium to Rome was a triumphal procession. All Italy, as he said himself, seemed to flock together to hail his auspicious return; that single day made his glory immortal.* He was loaded with honours; and his houses and villas, which had been razed to the ground, were rebuilt with increased magnificence at the expense of the public.

By the influence of Cicero, Pompey regained for a while his popularity. The triumvirate, though secretly animated with mutual jealousy, still continued to support each other in their power. Pompey and Crassus were elected consuls; the former having, for five years, the government of Spain, and the latter that of Syria, Greece, and Egypt. They had unlimited power to levy troops, and to exact whatever pecuniary supplies they found necessary, from the tributary princes and states under their governments. Crassus, insatiable in accumulating wealth, plundered the Eastern provinces without mercy; but having engaged in an inconsiderate expedition against the Parthians, he was totally defeated, his whole army cut to pieces and he himself and his son were slain in the field.

Cæsar, in the meantime, was prosecuting his military operations in Gaul, and seemed to take no concern in the affairs of Rome; yet, in reality, his influ-

* "Meus quidem reditus is fuit, ut a Brundisio usque ad Romam agmen perpetuum totius Italiæ viderem. Unus Ile dies mihi quidem instar immortalitatis fuit."

ence there now regulated every measure of importance. His partisans, to whom he remitted large sums of money, overruled all proceedings in the comitia, and carried whatever measures of a public nature he chose to direct as instrumental to his own views. Pompey was not blind to these views; and the apparent union and cordiality which they yet affected to maintain was anything but real. We shall soon see an open rupture, and a contention for undivided sovereignty, whose issue must decide the fate of the commonwealth.

CHAPTER II.

Cæsar passes the Rubicon—Marches to Rome—Named Dictator—Battle of Pharsalia—Flight and death of Pompey—Defeat of Pharnaces—Death of Cato—Cæsar's Reforms in the Roman State—Reform of the Calendar—Is created perpetual Dictator with the title of Imperator—Character of Cæsar—Is assassinated—Artful conduct of Mark Antony—His ambitious views—Second Triumvirate—Bloody Proscription—Death of Cicero—Battle of Philippi, and End of the republic—Battle of Actium—Death of Antony and Cleopatra—Octavius (afterward Augustus) sole master of the Roman Empire.

THE brilliancy of the warlike exploits of Cæsar, and the influence of his partisans in the public measures of the commonwealth, easily procured the prolongation of his government of the Gauls, to a period double the length of that for which it had been originally granted. In the course of ten years he had reduced the greater part of what is now called France into a Roman province; a conquest, in which his political talents were no less signally displayed than his abilities as a general. His Commentaries, a military journal which contains a brief and perspicuous detail

of his campaigns, are no less a proof of his excelling in those splendid features of a public character, than of his possessing all the qualities of a skilful and eloquent historian.

The renewed term of his government was on the eve of expiring; but this extraordinary man had no design of relinquishing his military command. To secure himself against a deprivation of power, he bribed Curio, one of the tribunes, to make a proposal which wore the appearance of great moderation, and regard for the public liberty. This was, that Cæsar and Pompey should either both continue in their governments, or both be recalled; as they were equally capable of endangering the safety of the commonwealth by an abuse of power. The motion passed, and Cæsar immediately offered to resign, on condition that his rival should follow his example; but Pompey rejected the proposal, probably aware of the real designs of Cæsar, but too confidently relying on the strength of his own party, and the influence he had with his troops. A civil war was the necessary consequence. Every connexion between these two ambitious men was now at an end. The death of Julia, the daughter of Cæsar, and wife of Pompey, dissolved that feeble bond of union which had hitherto subsisted between them.* They were now declared enemies, and each prepared to assert, by arms, his title to an unrestrained dominion over his country. It is not a little surprising, that the citizens of Rome should deliberately prepare to sacrifice their lives and fortunes in the decision of such a contest, with all the zeal of men who fight for their most valuable rights and possessions.

Pompey had on his side the consuls, and a great part

* This lady died in childbed. She was beloved by Pompey with the fondest affection; and thus, in the expressive words of Velleius Paterculus, *erat medium malè cohærentis inter Pompeium et Cæsarem concordiæ pignus*, was the reciprocal pledge of the frail union between Pompey and Cæsar. Lib. ii. c. 47.

of the senate. In one respect, he had justice on his side; for the term of his government was not yet at an end, and the proposed accommodation was evidently a snare laid for him by Cæsar. Cato and Cicero had taken part with Pompey, which showed their sense of the justice of his cause, for they were no false patriots. But Cæsar had in his favour a victorious army of veteran troops, profound military skill, and a great portion of popularity gained by his general character of humanity, and well-employed largesses among all ranks of the people.

The boundary which separates Italy from Cisalpine Gaul is a small river named the Rubicon. The Roman senate, aware of the designs of Cæsar, had pronounced a decree, devoting to the infernal gods whatever general should presume to pass this boundary with an army, a legion, or even a single cohort.

Cæsar, who, with all his ambition, inherited a large share of the benevolent affections, did not resolve on the decisive step which he had now taken without some compunction of mind. Arrived with his army at the border of his province, he hesitated for some time, while he pictured to himself the inevitable miseries of that civil war, in which he was now preparing to unsheath the sword. "If I pass this small stream," said he, "in what calamities must I involve my country! Yet, if I do not, I myself am ruined." The latter consideration was too powerful. Ambition, too, presented allurements which, to a mind like Cæsar's, were irresistible. He passed the boundary, and took possession of Ariminum, where he was joined by Mark Antony and Cassius. They were at that time *tribunes of the people;* and after endeavouring in vain to serve his interest at Rome, by strenuously opposing a decree of the senate, which required Cæsar to disband his army, now openly joined him in the field with a considerable body of their followers.

Rome was now in the utmost alarm and consternation. Cæsar had with him ten legions, while Pompey

to whom the city looked for its protection, and whom the senate had invested with all authority to defend the republic, had, with unpardonable supineness, taken no measures to guard against a step of this kind, which he might well have apprehended from the daring genius of his rival. He now ordered in haste a general levy to be made over all Italy; but found, to his mortification, that Cæsar had pre-occupied the most important places whence troops were to be drawn, and was daily joined by fresh reinforcements. His well-timed bounties, and that clemency which he showed on every success of his arms, and which was truly a part of his nature, had gained him the general favour. The circumstance of the two tribunes espousing his cause, gave it a show of patriotism; and he now publicly proclaimed, that his sole purpose in leaving his government was to vindicate the authority of *the people* thus injured in the persons of their magistrates.

Pompey was now sensible of his weakness. The voice of the public openly expressed an impatient desire for the arrival of Cæsar, who, on his part, was rapidly advancing to the gates of Rome, when Pompey quitted the city, followed by the consuls and the greater part of the senators. Unable to collect a sufficient force in Italy, he passed over into Epirus. The East had been the scene of his conquests, and thence he trusted that he would be supplied both with troops and treasure. Before sailing from Brundisium, he had declared that he would treat all those as enemies who did not follow him. Cæsar, with more wisdom, declared that he would esteem all those his friends who did not arm against him.

Cæsar, by immediately following Pompey, might, perhaps, have brought the war to a speedy termination; but, besides the want of transports for the conveyance of his army, he judged it hazardous to leave Italy defenceless against the lieutenants of Pompey, then in considerable force in the province of Spain. His first objects, therefore, were the securing the seat

of empire, and reducing the hostile army under Pompey's officers. After making his public entry into Rome, where he was received with the loudest acclamations, and possessing himself of the public treasury, he set out for Spain. Marseilles, which lay in his route, had declared for his rival; but leaving Trebonius to besiege it, he proceeded in his march to meet the lieutenants of Pompey, Afranius and Petreius. These he speedily subdued, and, compelling them to yield at discretion, sent them home to Rome to proclaim his clemency and moderation. In the space of forty days, all Spain submitted to the arms of Cæsar, and he returned victorious, to Rome, where, in his absence, he had been proclaimed dictator. In that quality, he presided at the annual election of the chief magistrate of the state, and was himself elected consul. He had now that legal title to act in the name of the republic, which he had hitherto wanted. If the power of a usurper is capable of being validated by the subsequent voluntary sanction of those over whom it is usurped, Cæsar had now that ratification.

Meantime, Pompey was strenuously collecting forces in Greece, Macedonia, and Epirus. He likewise drew large supplies from the sovereigns of Asia, and had already mustered an army of five legions, with five hundred ships-of-war, under the command of Bibulus. Cæsar embarked at Brundisium with an equal armament of five legions, and the two armies came in sight of each other near Dyrrachium in Illyria. After one doubtful engagement, in which the advantage was rather on the side of Pompey, Cæsar led him on to Macedonia, where he had two additional legions under his lieutenant Calvinus. Pompey, who was easily elated with every appearance of success, flattered himself that this was a retreat upon the part of his enemy. He was, therefore, anxious to come up with him, and eager to terminate the war by a general engagement. This was exactly what Cæsar wished. This important battle was fought in the field of Pharsalia. The

army of Pompey amounted to forty-five thousand foot, and seven thousand horse, which was more than double that of his rival; and so confident of victory were the former, that they had adorned their tents with festoons of laurel and myrtle, and prepared a splendid banquet against their return from the battle. Vain and presumptuous preparations! Of this immense army, fifteen thousand were left dead on the field, and twenty-four thousand surrendered themselves prisoners-of-war, and cheerfully incorporated themselves into the army of the victor, whose loss, in all, did not exceed two hundred men. Cæsar found in the camp of Pompey all his papers, containing the correspondence he carried on with the chief of his partisans at Rome. The sagacious and magnanimous chief committed them unopened to the flames, declaring that he wished rather to be ignorant who were his enemies, than to be obliged to punish them.

After this fatal engagement, Pompey experienced all the miseries of a fugitive. The last scenes of the life of this illustrious man afford a striking picture of the vicissitudes of fortune, and the instability of all human greatness. He passed the first night, after his defeat, in the solitary hut of a fisherman upon the seacoast. Thence he went on board a vessel, which landed him first at Amphipolis; whence he sailed to Lesbos, where his wife Cornelia was waiting, in anxious expectation, the issue of the late decisive conflict. They met upon the seashore. Pompey embraced her without uttering a word, and this silence spoke at once the whole extent of her misfortune. They fled for protection to Egypt, where Pompey expected to find a welcome asylum at the court of the young Ptolemy, whose father Auletes had owed to him his settlement upon the throne. But Ptolemy was then at war with his sister Cleopatra, to whom their father had jointly bequeathed the kingdom; and his ministers apprehending that Pompey would take the part of Cleopatra, in order to enforce that settlement of which the

Roman people were appointed the executors, immediately determined his destruction. The ship which carried Pompey and Cornelia had approached within sight of the land, and he despatched a messenger ashore desiring an audience of the Egyptian monarch. A single boat rowed off from the land, in which came some officers with orders to bring him on shore; and he parted with many tears from Cornelia, who was justly apprehensive of his safety, but could not foresee all the misery of his fate.

They were still in sight of the ship, and Pompey, who began to fear that he was betrayed, sought to ingratiate himself with those to whom he was now a prisoner. He reminded some of them of having served under his banners, when a few years before he was the conqueror of the East; but they, answering nothing, rowed on in gloomy silence till they reached the land. While Pompey rose to step on shore, he received the stroke of a dagger in his side, and, decently covering his face with his robe, resigned himself to his fate. They cut off his head, and cast his body naked upon the sand; where a faithful slave who had attended him, stealing to the place during the silence of the night, made a small funeral pile from the fragments of a boat, and burnt the body, carrying the ashes to Cornelia. "Princeps Romani nominis imperio arbitrioque Egyptii mancipii jugulatus est. Hic post tres consulatus, et totidem triumphos, domitumque terrarum orbem, vitæ fuit exitus. In tantum in illo viro a se discordante fortuna, ut cui modò ad victoriam terra defuerat, deesset ad sepulturam."*

Cæsar being told of the course which Pompey had

* He, the noblest of the Roman name, fell by the orders of an Egyptian bondsman.—Such was the miserable end of him who had thrice borne the dignity of consul, thrice been honoured with a triumph, and been, in fact, the lord of the world. In him so great was the reverse of fortune, that he, who but lately found the earth too small for his conquests, could not now command enough to cover his remains."—*Vell. Pater.* ii. 25.

steered, sailed directly to Alexandria. When informed of his fate, he could not restrain his tears; and when his murderers presented to him the head of that unhappy man, which they judged must have been to him a grateful spectacle, he turned aside with horror from the sight. He caused every honour to be paid to his memory, and from that time showed the utmost indulgence and even beneficence to the partisans of his unfortunate rival. Those men have a bad opinion of human nature, who ascribe this conduct altogether to a refined policy, and account Cæsar only the greater hypocrite, the more examples he showed of the milder virtues. An hypothesis so contrary to every rule of candid judgment, is contradicted by the whole tenor of this truly great man's life.

Ptolemy Auletes, the father of the present sovereign of Egypt, had named, as we before remarked, the Roman people as the executors of his testamentary settlement of the kingdom; and Cæsar, as acting in name of the republic, now took on himself the right of deciding between the pretensions of Cleopatra and her brother. The charms of Cleopatra had probably their influence on this decision. Such, at least, was the allegation of the partisans of the young Ptolemy, who for several months maintained his cause by force of arms, and besieged Cæsar in the city of Alexandria. In this war the young Ptolemy was killed, and an accident happened of which the general consequences were more to be deplored; the greater part of the celebrated library of the Ptolemys was burnt to the ground.* The issue of the war would probably have been fatal to

* The royal library of Alexandria was said to consist of seven hundred thousand volumes: of these, four hundred thousand, deposited in the quarter of the city called Bruchion, were destroyed on this occasion; the other part, containing three hundred thousand, was within the Serapeum, and escaped the flames; there it was that Cleopatra deposited the two hundred thousand volumes of the Pergamean library, given to her by Mark Antony. This was increased from age to age, was finally burnt by the calif Omar in A D. 642

Cæsar, had he not received timely succours from Asia. Thus reinforced, he brought the kingdom of Egypt under complete subjection, bestowing the sovereignty jointly on Cleopatra and a younger Ptolemy, a child of eleven years of age, the brother of the last prince.

He now turned his arms against Pharnaces, the son of Mithridates, who had seized the kingdom of Pontus, and meditated, after his father's example, to strip the Romans of their Asiatic possessions. This war he very speedily terminated, intimating its issue to his friends at Rome in three words, *Veni, vidi, vici.**

Thus having established order and tranquillity in in the East, Cæsar returned to Rome, where he was elected consul for the ensuing year, and dictator, the third time that he had enjoyed both these dignities. Rome stood in need of his presence; for the troops which, under the command of Mark Antony, had remained in Italy, had spread universal disorder and anarchy. The partisans of his late rival were at the same time in arms in Africa, headed by Scipio and Cato, who, together with the sons of Pompey, had fled thither after the defeat of Pharsalia, and received cordial aid from Juba, king of Mauritania. Cæsar, therefore, found the chief obstacle to his ambition in this quarter, and embarking for Africa, was obliged for some time to act with the greatest caution and avoid a general engagement with an enemy whose effective force, greatly outnumbered his own. He gained, however, several advantages, and his high reputation, together with the prevailing opinion of that prosperous fortune which had hitherto attended all his enterprises, caused daily desertions to his standard from the ranks of his enemies. A favourable situation at length presenting itself, he engaged the allied army at Thapsus, and obtained a complete victory. Scipio perished in his voyage to Spain. Cato alone remained, whose indomitable spirit no reverse of fortune was capable of forcing to yield to

* "I came, I saw, I conquered."

any terms of submission. With a frantic resolution, he shut himself up in Utica with a few noble spirits, who, like himself, disdained to yield to the Master of Rome. He formed the principal citizens into a senate, and for some time cherished the desperate purpose of holding out the town against the whole force which Cæsar could bring against it. But the spirits of his party were not equal to his own, and some of his friends venturing to hint a wish for a timely capitulation, Cato counselled them to provide as they judged best for their own safety. After supper, during which he conversed with his usual cheerfulness, he retired to his apartment, and for a while occupied himself in perusing Plato's *Dialogue on the Immortality of the Soul*. He then composed himself to sleep, and after a short repose, inquiring whether his friends had saved themselves by flight, and being assured that all was well, he calmly fell upon his sword.

Juba was now driven from his kingdom, and Mauritania became a Roman province. The victorious Cæsar returned to Rome. The natural clemency of his disposition now signally displayed itself: he remembered no longer that there had been opposite parties, but showed the same humane indulgence to the friends of Pompey, as if they had never been his enemies. Many of them he raised to offices of dignity and emolument, and found them henceforward the most attached of his partisans. He was decreed a splendid triumph, and on that occasion gratified the people with the most magnificent games and entertainments. Master of the state, he from this time employed his whole attention in contributing to its prosperity and happiness. He turned his mind to the reformation of abuses of every kind. He repressed luxury by sumptuary laws; stimulated industry by rewards; and by sedulously promoting the comforts of the lower class of citizens, gave the most effectual encouragement to population. While he thus ad-

vanced the prosperity of the capital, he introduced order and economy into the government of the provinces, where hitherto every species of oppression and peculation had been permitted and countenanced.

The genius of Cæsar was not confined to the arts of government, but carried its researches into every branch of science and philosophy. The duration of the year at this time was twelve lunar months, with an intercalation of twenty-two or twenty-three days, alternately, at the end of every two years: but the pontiffs either introduced or omitted the intercalation according to circumstances, as they wanted to abridge or prolong the time of the magistrates' continuing in office—and thus there was the greatest confusion in the calendar. Cæsar, who was a proficient in astronomy, and to whose writings in that science even Ptolemy confesses that he owed information, corrected the errors of the calendar, by fixing the solar year at three hundred and sixty-five days, with an intercalation of one day every fourth year.*

* Romulus divided the year into ten months, which consisted of three hundred and four days; but Numa added two other months, January and February, which made his year to contain three hundred and fifty-four days. But this computation, falling short of the space of a regular year by ten days and six hours nearly, occasioned every eighth year an interposition of three whole months, which they called the intercalary or leap year. The care of making this intercalation being left to the priests, they introduced or omitted a month whenever they pleased, till at last there was such disorder, that festivals came to be kept at a season quite different from that of their first institution. To remedy these abuses, Julius Cæsar added the odd ten days to Numa's year; and lest the odd six hours should create confusion, he ordered that, every fourth year, one whole day should be inserted, the next after the twenty-third of February, or next before the sixth of the calends of March; for which reason the supernumerary day was called *dies* bis-sextus, and thence the leap year came to be called *annus* bis-sextilis. This is the Julian or Old Style. Yet, because there wanted eleven minutes in the six odd hours of Julius's year, the equinoxes and solstices, losing something continually, were found, about the year

The sons of Pompey, Cneius and Sextus, attempted to rekindle the war in Spain; but they were soon subdued by Cæsar in a decisive engagement at Munda. Returning from this expedition to Rome, he was hailed the Father of his country, was created consul for ten years, and perpetual dictator. His person was declared *sacred;* as a symbol of which he was allowed to wear constantly a circlet of laurel, hitherto the temporary distinction of a triumphant general. In like manner the epithet of *imperator*, which was only occasionally bestowed on the commander of a victorious army, was now conferred on Cæsar as a perpetual title of honour, as he was invested for life with the power of chief commander of the whole armies of the state.

By these public acts and decrees of the Roman people, accumulating the most despotic powers of sovereignty in the person of an individual, the commonwealth of Rome had now voluntarily resigned its liberties: the ancient republican constitution was at an end: there were none who either had an interest or a desire to maintain it; for the passion for manly independence, and the anxious vindication of their rights as free citizens, which in former times animated the great body of the people, and checked all inordinate ambition in individuals, had now given place to that selfish spirit which is content with the pleasures of luxury, and seeks the gratification of its narrow schemes of enjoyment by courting the favour of a sovereign or meanly flattering his passions. The Roman liberty, as Montesquieu has well observed, was not extinguished by the ambition of a Pompey or of a Cæsar. If the sentiments of Cæsar and Pompey had been the same with those of Cato, others would have cherished the same ambitious thoughts which they discovered; and since the republic was fated to

1584, to have run back ten whole days: for which reason Pope Gregory XIII. cut off ten days to bring them to their proper places; and this is called the Gregorian or New Style.

fall, there never would have been wanting a hand to drag it to destruction.

Yet though the fall of a constitution is the necessary and unavoidable consequence of the decay of those principles by which it had originally been supported, men must reprobate the instrument of usurpation by which their ruin is finally accomplished. In this point of view the conduct of Cæsar cannot be vindicated on the score of right. He was a usurper; and had it been possible to restore the Roman liberty and the ancient fabric of the commonwealth by the extinction of the tyrant, an open and manly use of the sword for his destruction had been a meritorious and patriotic attempt. But here lay the delusion: it may be the fact, that those men who accomplished the death of Cæsar acted upon principles truly virtuous and patriotic; they did perhaps believe that, by his death, they would restore the liberty and ancient constitution of their country: but we must deplore the narrowness of their views, who did not perceive that an internal principle of corruption had annihilated the one, and must have proceeded to extinguish the other, although Julius Cæsar had never been born. Even Cicero, whose political principles led him to approve of the death of Cæsar, candidly owns that the republic gained nothing by that event:—"Interfecto domino, liberi non sumus: non fuit dominus ille fugiendus: sublato enim tyranno, tyrannida manere video."*

The personal character, too, of this illustrious man has greatly contributed to increase the censure of those who conspired and accomplished his death;†

* "The master is slain, but we are not the more free. It was not he who was to be dreaded. The tyrant is indeed removed, but the tyranny remains."—*Cic. ad Attic.* xiv. 14.

† Julius Cæsar united in himself more of the advantages of mind and body than perhaps any of his contemporaries, and to these were added the splendour of ancestry; for he could trace his pedigree, on his mother's side, up to Ancus

but in impartial reasoning on the merit or demerit of this action, it is not equitable to allow force to such considerations.

The magnificent schemes of a public nature which Cæsar had formed would certainly have contributed both to his own glory and to the interest and happiness of the people whom he governed; and a just sense of these benefits was doubtless the principal cause of his popularity while alive, and of the splendid reputation which has attended his memory. He had proposed to collect, arrange, and methodize the laws of his country. He had employed the most learned men of his times to collect libraries for the public use. He had planned the most magnificent structures for the embellishment of the city, and the preservation of the public records. He projected the draining of the marshes of Italy, which rendered the whole country unwholesome; the deepening the bed of the Tiber, and the construction of a harbour at the mouth of that river capable of receiving the largest vessels both for war and merchandise. We have no-

Martius; and the Julian family, of which he was the head, were generally believed to have descended from the Trojan Æneas. Velleius Paterculus thus shortly enumerates these striking characteristics of Cæsar: "Hic nobilissima Juliorum genitus familia, et quod inter omnes antiquissimos constabat, ab Anchise et Venere deducens genus forma omnium civium excellentissimus, vigore animi acerrimus, munificentia effusissimus, animo supra humanam et naturam et fidem evectus, magnitudine cogitationum, celeritate bellandi, patientia periculorum, magno illi Alexandro, sed sobrio nec iracundo, similimus."—*Vell. Pat.* ii. 41.

"Born of the most illustrious family of the Julii, and tracing his highest descent from Anchises and Venus, he excelled all his fellow-citizens in the graces of his person, the vigour of his mind, and the splendour of his munificence; and that to a degree not only beyond human nature, but beyond human conception: in the magnitude of his designs, his promptitude in war, his indifference to danger, he was the equal of the great Alexander, but in command over himself far his superior."

duced the reforms which he introduced in the government of the provinces. He proposed to have a complete survey and geographical delineation made of the whole Roman empire. These were certainly schemes equally splendid and beneficial to the public. They create a just admiration of the character of Cæsar, and make us regret that blind and infatuated zeal which frustrated the accomplishment of those great designs, without giving in exchange for them any real or substantial good.

It was almost the only weakness of this truly great man, that, possessing the reality of sovereign power, he was not satisfied without obtaining likewise its external pageantry. To gratify this frivolous passion, the senate had decreed him the privilege of constantly wearing the triumphal robe, of having a gilded chair of state, and of taking the precedence of all the magistrates of the commonwealth. He was allowed a constant escort of knights and senators; his birthday was ordained to be solemnized as a festival through the whole empire, and a temple was built and priests appointed to offer sacrifice unto the Julian Jupiter. It was generally believed that he coveted a yet more dangerous distinction, and had determined that the title of KING, which, from the days of the last Tarquin, had been odious to every Roman ear, should be revived in his person. The report was current, that a party of the senators had determined to crown him in public by that title on the ides of March. A conspiracy had been for some time formed, at the head of which were Marcus Brutus and Caius Cassius, whom Cæsar had placed on the list of prætors, and intrusted with the higher jurisdiction of the city—the former a man whom he had reason to believe most sincerely attached to him, as he had saved his life at the battle of Pharsalia, and given him numberless proofs of his affection. The conspirators determined to execute their purpose on that day which had been destined for bestowing on Cæsar the regal title. He had no sooner taken his

place in the senate-house, than the conspirators, surrounding him, plunged their daggers into his body. He defended himself for some time, till seeing Brutus among the assassins, whom he had always distinguished by the epithet of his son, he resigned himself to his fate, and fell, pierced with twenty-three wounds, at the foot of Pompey's statue.

The conspirators had no sooner accomplished their purpose, than they ran through the streets of the city, proclaiming aloud that the king of Rome was dead; but the effect did not answer their expectation. The people, almost to a man, seemed struck with horror at the deed. They loved Cæsar, master as he was of their lives and liberties. Mark Antony, who was consul, and Lepidus, the general of the horse, ambitious themselves of succeeding to the power of the dictator, resolved to pave the way for it by avenging his death. The senate was convoked to determine whether the ordinances of the late dictator had the force of law—that is to say, whether Cæsar was a usurper, or was invested with legal authority. It was a nice question, but it required an immediate determination. The senators were of opposite opinions. The party of the assassins was formidable, from the experience of what they had the courage to attempt; yet the extreme disorder that must have ensued from annulling all the laws and regulations of the dictator, made it a thing impossible to be thought of in the present situation of affairs. The senate had recourse to an equivocal, and in fact a contradictory decree; which was, to confirm all the laws of Cæsar, and to declare at the same time, that his murderers should not be prosecuted. But the latter part of this decree was evaded by the art of Antony, who determined to call forth the vengeance of the people upon the heads of those men whom he justly regarded as the chief obstacles to his own designs of ambition.

Cæsar had adopted Caius Octavius, the grandson of his sister Julia, and left him heir to the greatest part

of his fortune. He had appointed several of the conspirators themselves for his tutors, and had bequeathed a large legacy to the people of Rome, to be divided among the whole of the citizens. These bequests redoubled the affection of the people, and they flocked to attend his obsequies, penetrated with the highest regard to his memory, and with the utmost indignation against his murderers. Mark Antony took advantage of these favourable dispositions. The body being laid on a couch of state in the *forum*, he mounted the consul's tribunal, and after reading the decree of the senate, which had conferred upon Cæsar even the honours due to a divinity, he entered into an enumeration of all his illustrious achievements for the glory and aggrandizement of the state. He then proceeded to recount the examples of his clemency, and heightened all his virtues with the most pathetic eloquence. "By these titles we have sworn that his person should be held sacred and inviolable; and here," said he "behold the force of our oaths." At these words, he lifted up the robe which covered the body, and holding it out to the people, who melted into tears, he showed it all covered with blood, and pierced with the daggers of the conspirators. A general cry of vengeance was heard. The populace strove to increase the funeral pile by throwing into it their most precious effects; while numbers ran to destroy and set fire to the houses of the murderers. These at first fled to the Capitol for safety; but finding their lives even there in the utmost hazard, prudently quitted the city, and sought shelter in the distant provinces.

The consul Antony, by the steps he had hitherto taken, wanted only to sound the dispositions of the people. Finding these to his wish, he very soon began to discover his own views of ambition. He was possessed of the whole of the dictator's papers. He had received, likewise, from Calpurnia, the widow, all the treasures of Cæsar. Not content with these, he made a traffic of fabricating acts and deeds, to which

he counterfeited the dictator's subscription, and availed himself of them as genuine. He next persuaded the senate, on pretence that his personal safety was in danger, to allow him a guard; and under that decree, he chose six thousand of the ablest veterans, whom he imbodied and armed. Thus secured, he found himself absolute master in Rome. In all revolutions, there are critical moments, when all that is requisite to the attainment of the supreme power is the courage to assume it.

But the ambition of Antony was frustrated by the measures of a rival against whom he had not provided. The young Octavius arrived in Rome; and declaring himself the heir of Cæsar, found no other title necessary to gain the favour of the people—a powerful stimulant to the ambitious plan he had secretly formed of succeeding to the full power of the dictator. Pursuing the same object with Antony, it was impossible they could long be on good terms. An open rupture ensued on occasion of the government of Cisalpine Gaul, which Antony, in opposition to the will of the dictator, who had decreed it to Decimus Brutus, endeavoured to secure for himself. This province, from its vicinity to the capital, was always of prime importance to the ruler of the state.

Octavius on this occasion armed against him, in order to enforce the will of his adopted father. He had the address to persuade the senate into his views, and to inspire them with a dread of the ambition of his rival. But after some indecisive acts of hostility, Octavius and Antony, finding their parties very nearly balanced, judged it for the present to be their most prudent scheme to unite their interests, and to admit into their association Lepidus, who then enjoyed the government of Transalpine Gaul. Thus was formed the second triumvirate, the effects of whose union were beyond measure dreadful. Octavius, Mark Antony, and Lepidus held a conference in a small island in the middle of the river Po. They

agreed that, under the title of Triumviri, they should possess themselves of absolute authority; and they made a partition on the spot of all the provinces, and divided between them the command of the legions. Lepidus had Gallia and Narbonnensis and Spain: Antony had Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul; Octavius contented himself with Africa, Sicily, and Sardinia. None of them ventured to appropriate to himself Italy; because they affected to regard that country as the *communis patria*, the common country, which they were all equally bound to protect and defend. The eastern provinces were as yet possessed by Brutus and the other conspirators, against whom it was determined that Antony and Octavius should immediately march with a large army.

Before entering, however, upon this expedition, it was resolved to clear the way by a proscription of all that were obnoxious to any one of the triumviri: a dreadful resolution! since the firmest friends of any one of the three had necessarily been the enemies of the others. What souls must those men have possessed who could advise or consent to so horrible a scheme! Lepidus agreed to sacrifice his brother Paulus; Antony, his uncle Lucius Cæsar; Octavius, his guardian Torranius, and his friend Cicero. The latter had been won, by the flattery of Octavius, to espouse his interest by unmasking the ambitious design of Antony to succeed to the power of the dictator; on which occasion, Cicero pronounced his famous Philippics, in imitation of the orations of Demosthenes to rouse the spirit of the Greeks against the designs of the Macedonian tyrant. It was no wonder, then, that Antony should mark this illustrious man as a certain victim of his revenge.

Cicero, who had never been remarkable for strength of mind, showed more magnanimity on this occasion than he had ever before manifested. When informed that his name was included in the proscription, he yielded at first to the earnest persuasion of his friends

to attempt to save himself by flight: but on being informed that the country was beset by his enemies, so as to leave no chance for his escape, he desired to be carried to one of his own villas. On perceiving the approach of a band of soldiers, who were commissioned to assassinate him, he ordered his litter to be stopped, beheld his murderers with a fixed regard, and stretched out his neck to the blow. A fragment of one of the lost books of Livy gives a striking description of this last scene in the life of Cicero. After judiciously remarking, that amid all the reverses of fortune which this great man had undergone, it was only on this last occasion that he displayed true magnanimity, the historian adds these words: *Siquis tamen virtutibus vitia pensârit, vir magnus, acer, memorabalis fuit, et in cujus laudes persequendas Cicerone laudatore opus fuerit.** In this horrible proscription, three hundred senators and three thousand Roman knights were put to death in cold blood.

Satiated, at length, with murder, the triumvirate prepared for their expedition against the conspirators. Lepidus remained in Rome, while Antony and Octavius marched against Brutus and Cassius, then in Macedonia. No Roman armies had ever been seen equal in number to those which were now to decide the fate of the world. Each party led into the field above one hundred thousand men. They met near the town of Philippi, on the confines of Macedonia. This decisive battle was fought on both sides with the most desperate courage. Brutus was victorious at the head of that division which he commanded; but too rashly pursuing his success, he separated himself from the main body of the army, which in the meantime was vigorously attacked by Antony, and entirely broken. Cassius, ignorant of what had be-

* "But weighing his great qualities with his failings, he was a great and most able man, to do justice to whose praises would require a second Cicero."

come of Brutus, and believing that all was lost, obliged one of his own freedmen to put him to death. The plan of Brutus, who had come off in safety with a large body of men, was evidently now to avoid a second engagement: but his troops, flushed with their individual success, forced him to come to action, and he was totally defeated. Convinced that the chances of success were now irretrievably gone, and well-assured of the fate he had to expect from the conquerors, he chose to deprive his enemies at least of one victim, and, falling on his sword, he died the death of his friend Cassius.

Octavius appears in this decisive action to have behaved in no heroic manner. It was even asserted that he chose to post himself among the baggage in the rear, during the whole time of the engagement; and such a report, even if we suppose it a falsehood, is, at least, a proof that he had not the reputation of valour. Mark Antony had real courage, and after victory displayed that generosity which is ever its attendant; while the former exhibited a cruelty of nature which is the inseparable companion of cowardice. He caused the most distinguished of the prisoners to be slaughtered before his eyes, and even insulted them in the agonies of death.

The Triumvirs were obliged to gratify their troops with very high rewards. To furnish a supply for that necessary purpose, Antony went into Asia, where he levied the most exorbitant contributions from the tributary states. While in Cilicia, he summoned Cleopatra, who, by assassinating her brother, had secured to herself the undivided sovereignty of Egypt, to appear before him, and answer for her conduct in allowing Serapion, her lieutenant in the isle of Cyprus, to send succours to Cassius. The queen came to Tarsus. Her beauty, the splendour of her suite and equipage, and the artful allurements of her manners, made a complete conquest of the triumvir. He forgot glory, ambition, fame, and everything for Cleopatra. Octa-

vius, meantime, thought of nothing but his own interest and exaltation, to which he regarded the infatuation of Antony as a most happy preparative.

The younger Pompey had taken possession of Sicily, of Sardinia, and Corsica. Octavius now turned his attention to this quarter; but incapable himself of commanding in a military expedition, he employed Marcus Agrippa, a man of uncommon talents, whom he had raised from obscurity to the consulship; and who very speedily compelled Pompey to evacuate Sicily and all his other possessions, and fly into Asia, where he was put to death by the lieutenants of Antony.

Octavius now determined to rid himself of the partners of his power. Lepidus, a man of an indolent character and no talent, had already lost all credit, even with his own troops. The legions under his command, won by the bribes and promises of Octavius, deserted their general, who, sensible of his own insufficiency, sought permission to retire to Circæum on the Latian coast, where he passed the remainder of his life in quiet obscurity. It has been well remarked of this man, who for some time sustained a high part in the political drama of the times, that he had neither those virtues nor those vices for which the names of men are transmitted with distinction to posterity.

Antony, in the meantime, intoxicated with Eastern luxury and debauchery, was daily sinking in the esteem of his army. In the madness of his passion for Cleopatra, he had proclaimed her queen of Egypt, Cyprus, Africa, and Cœlo Syria; and lavished kingdoms and provinces on the children that were the fruit of her various amours. These shameless proceedings reflected dishonour on the Roman name, and deprived him of the esteem of his best friends; and the imprudent measure he now took in divorcing his wife Octavia, the sister of his colleague, was a justifiable cause for their coming to an open rupture, and appealing to the sword to decide their claim to undivided sovereignty of the empire. Octavius had foreseen this issue, and

made formidable preparations, which Antony had supinely neglected. He trusted chiefly to his fleet, and was persuaded by Cleopatra to rest the fortune of the war on a naval engagement, which was fought near Actium in Epirus. In the heat of the battle, which was maintained for some time with equal spirit, Cleopatra with her Egyptian armament of sixty galleys took to flight; and what is scarcely conceivable, such was the infatuation of Antony, that he followed her, leaving his fleet to fight for themselves. After a contest of some hours, they yielded to the squadron of Octavius. The army of Antony, which had witnessed this engagement from the land, held out for a few days, in hopes of the return of their commander, but at length seeing their expectation vain, they surrendered to the victor. The flight of Cleopatra had been attributed by Antony to female timidity; but her subsequent conduct gave full reason to believe it shameful treachery. Octavius pursued the fugitives to Egypt, where Antony, in desperate infatuation, gave himself up entirely to riot and debauchery, still blind to the treacherous character of his paramour, who, in the meantime, was carrying on a secret negotiation with Octavius, on whom she vainly imagined that her personal charms might have such influence as to procure her association in the supreme power and government of the Roman empire. In this view she surrendered to him the sovereignty of Egypt, while, without positively assenting to her terms, Octavius gave her reason to believe that he was not disinclined to an accommodation that would gratify her utmost ambition.

Meantime Octavius advancing with his army to besiege Pelusium, its governor, instructed by Cleopatra, surrendered the city at discretion, and this event was followed by the surrender of the Egyptian fleet. The eyes of Antony were at length opened. He plainly saw that he was betrayed. A report which Cleopatra caused to be spread, that she had put an end to her life, hastened the fate of her injured lover, who

died by his own hand; and Cleopatra, soon after, discovering that all her arts were lost upon Octavius, who had determined to treat her as a captive, now executed in reality what she had before feigned, and put herself to death by the poison of an asp.

Octavius returned to Italy, sole master of the Roman Empire. He owed his elevation to no manly virtue or heroism of character. A concurrence of happy circumstances, the adoption of the great Julius, the weakness of Lepidus, the folly and infatuation of Antony, the treachery of Cleopatra, and, above all, his own address and artifice, were the instruments of his fortune.

At this remarkable period, the end of the Commonwealth of Rome, it may be well to suspend for a while our historical narrative, and interpose some brief observations on the general character of Roman education; the state of literature at this period; the predominant tastes and passions of this remarkable people; and the system of their military art.

CHAPTER III.

On the Genius and National Character of the Romans—System of Roman Education—Progress of Literature—The Drama—Historians—Poets.

In the present chapter, we are to attend to those particular circumstances which appear most peculiarly to mark the genius, and to have formed the national character of the Romans.

A virtuous but rigid severity of manners was the characteristic of the Romans under their kings, and during the first ages of the republic. The private life of the citizens was frugal, temperate, and laborious,

and it reflected its influence on their public character. The children imbibed from their infancy the highest veneration for their parents, who, from the extent of the paternal power among the Romans, had an unlimited authority over their wives, their offspring, and their slaves. It is far from natural to the human mind that the possession of power and authority should form a tyrannical disposition. Where that authority, indeed, has been usurped by violence, its possessor may perhaps, be tempted to maintain it by tyranny; but where it is either a right dictated by nature, or the easy effect of circumstances and situation, the very consciousness of authority is apt to inspire a beneficence and humanity in the manner of exercising it. Thus we find the ancient Romans, although absolute sovereigns in their families, with the *jus vitæ et necis*, the *right of life and death*, over their children, and their slaves, were yet excellent husbands, kind and affectionate parents, humane and indulgent masters. Nor was it until luxury had corrupted the virtuous simplicity of the ancient manners, that this paternal authority, degenerating into tyrannical abuses, required to be abridged in its power, and restrained in its exercise, by the enactment of laws.

By an apparent contradiction, so long as the paternal authority was absolute, the slaves and children were happy: when it became weakened and abridged, then it was that its terrors were, from the excessive corruption of manners, most severely felt. Even, however, under the first emperors, the Patria Potestas, the paternal power, remained in its full force, and the custom of the *patres-familias*, fathers of families, sitting at meals with their slaves and children, showed that there still remained some venerable traces of that ancient and virtuous simplicity.*

* "O noctes cœnæque Deûm, quibus ipse, meique
Ante Larem proprium vescor, vernasque procaces
Pasco libatis dapibus prout cuique libido est."—Hor.

"Oh nights and feasts divine, when I and mine sup in the

Plutarch, in his comparison between Numa and Lycurgus, has bestowed a severe censure on the Roman lawgiver, for his neglecting to establish a system, or to institute any fixed rules for the education of the Roman youth. But the truth is, that although the *laws* prescribed no such system, or general plan of discipline, like those of Sparta, yet there never existed a people who bestowed more attention on the education of their youth. In the dialogue, *De Oratoribus*,* attributed by some authors to Tacitus, by others to Quintilian, there is a fine passage which shows in a remarkable manner that extreme care bestowed, even in the earliest infancy, to form the manners and disposition of the Roman children. From this passage we learn, that in the earlier ages of the Roman commonwealth, such was that anxious care bestowed on their children by the Roman matrons—such that jealousy of their receiving any of their earliest impressions from slaves or domestics—that they not only educated their own children, but accounted it an honourable employment to superintend and assist in educating the children of their relations.

Nor was this task of the mother confined only to the years of infancy and boyhood: it extended its influence to the more advanced periods of youth. At a much later period of the Roman history, we are informed by Tacitus, in his Life of Agricola, that this remarkable man had begun in his youth to pursue too ardently the study of philosophy, but that he was checked by the prudent remonstrances of his mother.†

presence of our own household god; and regale our merry slaves on as much as each one desires of the tasted vianda."

* Dialogus de Oratoribus, cap. xxviii. "Jampridem suus cuique filius," &c.

† "Memoria teneo solitum ipsum narrare, se in primâ juventâ studium philosophiæ ac juris ultra quam concessum Romano ac Senatori haussisse, ni prudentia matris incensum ac flagrantem animum coercuisset."—*Tacitus Agric. Vit.*, c. iv,

To inspire that severe and rigid *virtue* which can alone support a democratic form of government, and to inculcate that exclusive love of our country, before which, in their early ages, every private or personal feeling was constrained to bow, was the first and most sacred duty of these noble matrons. The circumstances in which the commonwealth was situated in its earlier ages made this absolute necessary. It possessed none of those artificial modes of defence so generally employed by modern nations. The improvements of modern warfare, which substitute skill so often in the place of valour—the fortifications of our modern cities, which render them, in some measure, independent of the personal exertions of those who defend them—had not been introduced among this virtuous people. Those refinements, also, in the arts and manufactures which exchange the little enjoyments of private comfort for the higher feelings of public happiness, and even that progress in the sciences, which, however excellent in its general consequences, encourages certainly a spirit of exclusion most uncongenial to public exertion—all these were either unknown or despised in the severer ages of the Roman republic.

Next to this care of the mother, or the female tutor, in instilling the rigid principle of patriotic virtue, a very remarkable degree of attention appears to have been bestowed by the Romans in accustoming their children to correctness of language and purity of expression. Cicero informs us that the Gracchi were brought up *non tam in gremio quam in sermone matris*—not so much by the nursing as by the instruction of their mother. And in speaking of Curio, who was one of the best orators of his time, he adds, that without possessing the rules of his art, and without any knowledge of the laws, he had attained to eminence* merely from the elegance and purity of his diction.

* In Libro de Claris Oratoribus. Al. edit., folio, vol. ii. p. 257.

This attention to the language of children may appear, in these modern days, an absurd and useless refinement. Among the Romans it was not thought so. They were well aware how much the man is influenced by the earliest impressions and habits of infancy. They suspected, and not without just grounds, that they who became familiar with the language and expressions of their slaves, were likely to be initiated also in their vices, and to become reconciled to their ideas of servility and dependance. That *urbanity* upon which this people so much prided themselves in the more advanced periods of the commonwealth, was nothing else than a certain manly elegance which distinguished the Roman citizens from those nations whom they accounted barbarous. This elegance was particularly evinced in their speech and gestures, and it was one of their first objects to form their youth in those qualities in which they most piqued themselves in excelling. To accustom a child to speak in a manly manner is, in fact, no unlikely method of teaching him to act so.* But this attention to the language of their youth had another source among the Romans. It was by the art of eloquence, by the power which that talent gave them over the minds of the people, and the influence which it possessed in the open deliberations of the popular assemblies, that the young Romans could alone rise to eminence, to office, and to dignity. History is full of examples of men who, by their excellence in this talent alone, had risen from the lowest condition among the plebeians, to the highest ranks in the state. To instil, therefore, at an early age, the elements of elocution, and to habituate the youth to those studies properly called *forensic*, was one great object of the Roman education. As an exercise of memory, the children were taught to repeat the laws of the XII Tables, and they were accus-

* "Talis hominibus oratio qualis vita." *Seneca*, Epist. 114.
"As a man's manner of speaking is, so is his life."

tomed very early to plead fictitious causes. Plutarch tells us, in his life of the younger Cato, that, among the sports or plays of the Roman children, one was that of pleading causes before a mock tribunal, and accusing and defending a criminal in all the accustomed forms of judicial procedure.

The exercises of the body were likewise particularly attended to. Wrestling, running, boxing, swimming, using the bow and javelin, managing the horse, and, in short, whatever might harden the body and increase its strength and activity, were all reckoned necessary parts of education. Most of these warlike exercises were practised daily in the Campus Martius. The elder Cato not only instructed his son in grammar, and in the study of the law, but taught him also all these athletic accomplishments.

At the age of seventeen, which was the period when the young Roman assumed the *toga virilis*, the garment of manhood, the youth was committed by his father to the care of one of the masters or public professors of rhetoric, whom he attended constantly to the forum, and there employed himself in taking notes from the speakers, of whose harangues he afterward gave an account to his preceptor.

It must not appear extraordinary that this mode of education should have been common to all the young patricians, whether their inclination led them to the camp or to the bar; for as every citizen of Rome was a branch of its legislative system, the profession of arms became no apology for the want of that ability of maintaining the rights of the state in the assemblies of the people, which was equally necessary with the capacity of defending them in the field. If a public officer was accused, it was reckoned shameful if he could not himself give an account of his conduct, and plead his own cause. A senator who could not support his opinion by the ingenuity of argument or the force of eloquence, was an object of contempt to the people. "Parum fuit in senatu breviter censere, nisi

qui ingenio et eloquentia sententiam suam teneretur; disertum haberi, pulchrum et gloriosum, sed contra mutum et elinguem videri deforme habebatur." But it was not alone the cultivation of eloquence which was esteemed a necessary part of education. It was reckoned dishonourable for any person of the patrician rank not to have thoroughly studied the laws and the constitution of his country. In one of the laws of the Roman Pandects, an anecdote is recorded of Sulpitius, a gentleman of the patrician order, who had occasion to resort for advice to Quintus Mucius Scævola, then the most eminent lawyer in Rome. Though otherwise an accomplished orator, Sulpitius had neglected the study of the law, and, from ignorance of the technical terms, he did not comprehend the meaning of Scævola's opinion; upon which he received from the lawyer this memorable reproof, that "it was a shame for a patrician, a nobleman, and an orator, to be ignorant of that law in which he was so particularly concerned." Sulpitius felt the reproach, and applied himself to the study of jurisprudence, in which he became so eminent as, in Cicero's opinion, to excel Scævola himself.*

To be an accomplished gentleman, therefore, it was necessary among the Romans to be an accomplished lawyer and orator; and what were the requisites for attaining eminence in those departments we may learn from the writings of Cicero, Quintilian, and the younger Pliny. The pains those illustrious men bestowed to arrive at that excellence which distinguished them, to those bred up in the less laborious efforts of modern literature, appear almost incredible. Pliny, in speaking of his public orations, which he always committed to writing, describes thus the labour of their revision: —"Nullum emendandi genus omitto; ac primum quæ scripsi mecum ipse pertracto; deinde duobus aut tribus lego, mox, aliis trado adnotanda, notasque eorum si dubito cum uno rursus aut altero pensito; novissi-

* Digest. lib. i. tit. ii. sec. 43.

mé pluribus recito; ac si quid mihi credis acerrime emendo; cogito quam sit magnum dare aliquid in manus hominum, nec persuadere mihi possum non et cum multis et sæpe tractandum quod placere et semper et omnibus cupias."*

Such were the pains bestowed by Pliny to attain the character of an accomplished writer—a degree of industry, however, for which he does not seem to claim any extraordinary merit, as for a labour uncommon among the authors of his time. On the contrary, the same author, speaking of the studies of his uncle, the elder Pliny, modestly styles himself an indolent man, when compared to that prodigy of industry and application, with the manner of whose singular life we shall become more intimately acquainted, when treating of the state of *philosophy* among the Romans.

When an attention to rhetoric and the art of composition was thus once introduced, the progress of general literature in the Roman republic was singularly rapid; and it may here be an object of pleasing as well as of useful investigation, to attempt a brief delineation of the progress of literature among this remarkable people, from its earliest stages to its highest advancement, shortly remarking, as we proceed, the peculiar genius and character of the principal authors who have become distinguished under its different eras. Superficial, certainly, and imperfect every account of this kind must be, from that brevity which the nature of our plan demands.

* "I neglect no possible mode of correction and emendation; and in the first place, after I have written an oration, I carefully revise it by myself; I then read it over to two or three friends; afterward I submit it to others for their annotations, and if I doubt the justice of their criticisms, I canvass them with each; lastly, I recite the oration to a large assembly of my friends; and, believe, even after this, I carefully reconsider and revise it. I hold it no light matter to come before the public; nor can I persuade myself that less pains are requisite on the part of an orator who aims at general and lasting approbation."

The poetical spirit appears almost coeval with the very rudest condition of society. Other branches of human knowledge which have arisen in the gradual progress of improvement, have owed their origin to the wandering and adventurous spirit of the species, or to the wants and sufferings of mankind; but poetry seems to have been created with man, and is contemporaneous with his language; and what is more remarkable, it is in this early age that poetry often assumes its highest character, and arrives at its greatest perfection.

Language, in the early periods of every nation, is in a very rude condition; and it is in this imperfection and apparent barrenness of the language, that we shall find one cause for the lofty tone assumed by the poetry. The words are few, but they are invariably expressive. They are descriptive of the strongest passions, of the deepest feelings of the human heart, of patriotism and valour, of grief and joy, of triumph and despair, of love and hatred—of such feelings as are to be found among every uncultivated people, when nature is certainly comparatively in a savage state; but when none of those fantastic and artificial ideas, and therefore none of those low and insipid expressions have been introduced, which invariably accompany the process of luxury and refinement. In the ancient languages of a rude people, we find no redundancy of expletives, no unnecessary words, no unmeaning synonymes; because language is formed to describe what passes in the minds or before the eyes of those who use it. Even in their common discourse, and still more in their war-songs, or their solemn harangues, the speakers were actually compelled to be nervous, concise, and frequently metaphorical. The high-flown and figurative style must have then become as much a matter of necessity, owing to the barrenness of the language, as the effect of taste or imagination. When man first found himself in society, the Almighty, in the language which he created

for him, did not furnish him with what was calculated to delineate the minuter feelings of the heart, or the more detailed and delicate scenery of nature; but with that broad and bolder pencil which could describe those conflicting passions which then tore his mind, or those awful solitudes with which he was then surrounded.

In the infancy of any people, and consequently in the infancy of their language, we must also recollect that there are none of those arbitrary rules of composition, which the progress of literature has introduced. The effect of these is often to trammel the flights of genius, and often to shelter the efforts of mediocrity. Those in the community of moderate genius, or comparatively lower talents, are encouraged to intrude their minor efforts into notice, while the retired spirits, whose genius and talents fitted them for a higher course, will not stoop to such unequal competition.

There is yet one other cause of the excellence of early poetry, which, before proceeding to that of the Romans, we may very briefly notice; I mean that which is generally to be found in the character and habits of the poet himself, and in the circumstance of their poems having been addressed to the whole body of the people. A moment's reflection will show that these two circumstances must, in a great measure, form the style of the national poetry and, of course, regulate the tone of the national taste.

In reading the Agamemnon of Æschylus, who is there that will not discover that he is perusing the poetry of a warrior, who feels, in the memory of the battles in which he has fought, the full force of his own energetic descriptions, who lived in the midst of the scenery which he paints from, and who addressed himself not to any particular set of men who regulated the public taste, not to the senate, to the academy, or to the camp alone, but directed his efforts to the great body of the Athenian people, from whose feelings and whose taste he looked for his proudest and

most lasting applause. When we dwell with enthusiasm on the sublimity of the Scandinavian sagos, or the eloquence of the North American warriors, we are tracing the very same effects produced by the same causes above enumerated. The poets lived and wrote in the midst of that sublime scenery from which they drew their noblest pictures; they were themselves free, and they felt deeply the passions which agitate the mind in the ruder periods of society, and they addressed their equals in the body of the people, who knew well how to distinguish their errors, and appreciate their success.

The history of this delightful art, in ancient as well as in more modern times, will, as we trace its future progress, be found to exemplify in a striking manner the truth of these remarks. Among all nations, as has been said, the first dawning of the literary spirit is shown in poetical compositions. The Roman warrior, like the Indian or the Gothic, had his war-songs, which celebrated his sagacity in council, and his triumphs in the field. But none of these relicts of the first Roman poetry have reached our days. After the establishment of a closer political union, and the introduction of a national religion, if the nation subsists, as in the early ages of Rome, by agriculture, their poetry assumes a new character. The verses in praise of the gods, whom they believed to preside over the year, and to regulate the fruitfulness of the seasons, and the rude but joyful songs which commemorated the close of the harvest, were examples of this second style. These last are particularly mentioned by Livy under the name of the Versus Fescennini, which were sung alternately by the labourers, and which were composed in a strain of rude and mirthful poetry, but not unsparingly tinged with ribaldry and licentiousness.

About the 390th year of Rome, the city had been reduced to extreme distress by a pestilence, and an uncommon method was adopted to appease the wrath of the gods, in sending into Etruria for drolls or stage-

dancers. The dances of these Etrurians, according to Livy, were not ungraceful, and the Roman youth readily learned to imitate their performances, adding to them their own fescennine ballads, which they recited to the sound of music with appropriate gestures. Here evidently was the first rise of dramatic performances among the Romans; but, as yet, all was rude and imperfect, and they were altogether ignorant of the regular structure of a dramatic composition. This they acquired the first idea of from the Greeks. Euripides and Sophocles had flourished nearly one hundred and sixty years, and Menander above fifty years, before this period. The dramatic poem was, at this time, in the highest celebrity in Greece, and was at length, about the year of Rome 514, introduced into that commonwealth by Livius Andronicus, a Greek slave.

To Livius Andronicus, whose compositions, in the judgment of Cicero, did not merit a second perusal, succeeded Nævius and Ennius.* Nævius, probably,

* Ennius was a genius of very uncommon powers from nature, and these he had improved by an intimate acquaintance with Greek literature. He composed, in hexameter verse, the Annals of the Punic War; a poem on Scipio; a book of Epigrams or Inscriptions: and above forty dramatic pieces in Iambic verse; of all these, nothing but a few fragments remain. Like most original geniuses, he was abundantly conscious of his own merits, as appears from the inscription he composed for a statue of himself:—

"Aspice O cives senis Ennii imaginis formam.
Hic vestrum panxit maxima facta patrum.
Nemo me lacrimis decoret, neque funera fletu.
Faxit. cur.? volito vivu per ora virûm."

The following picturesque description of the dead of night, by Ennius, is the production of a sublime imagination:—

"Mundus cœli vastus constitit silentio.
Ex Neptunus sævus undis asperis pausam dedit
Sol equis iter repressit ungulis volantibus;
Consistere amnes perennes, arbores vento vacant."

There are many beautiful single lines to be found scattered among the fragments which have reached our time, but few perfect passages.

only imitated and improved upon the rude compositions of Andronicus; but *Ennius* was the first who, as Lucretius tells us, deserved a lasting crown from the Muses:—

"——— Ennius qui primus amœno
Detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde coronam."*

The fragments of Ennius which have come down to our time illustrate strongly the observations which we have above made on the character of the early poetical productions of most rude nations. His poetry is bold and energetic; his sentiments often noble; his diction careless but vigorous; his versification rude and imperfect: he trusted to his genius for his future fame, and left the niceties of art and versification to his more polished descendants. One of these has finely drawn his character in a single line:—

"Ennius *ingenio* maximus, *arte* rudis."†
Ovid. Trist. book ii. v. 452.

From the time of Ennius, dramatic poetry made a rapid advancement; for the intercourse with Greece, after the Punic wars, had an almost immediate effect in promoting the literary spirit, which first evinced itself in the improvement of the drama.

"Post Punica bella quietus quærere cepit,
Quid Sophocles et Thespis et Æschylus utile ferrent."‡

Then arose *Plautus*, the first who may be said to have proposed to himself nature as his model, but nature in so low and coarse an aspect as to make us feel often more disgusted than delighted with the vulgar

* "Ennius, who robbed the Heliconian fount
Of the first bays to deck his honoured front."
† "Ennius mighty in genius, but unimproved by art."
‡ "After the Punic wars, inquiry began to be made as to the merits of Sophocles, and Thespis, and Æschylus."

fidelity of his pictures. It is indeed, something like a profanation of the name of nature, to believe that those authors who have studied in the very lowest school of vice and profligacy, who have copied human manners in their most degraded condition, have had nature for their model. These observations are particularly applicable to the dramatic works of Plautus, who has described nature not as she really was, but as transfigured by the vice and impurity of man. The general Latinity of Plautus is nervous and concise. It is pure, it is sometimes, perhaps, elegant, when we understand purity in opposition to the being florid or figurative; but it is too crowded with Græcisms, and the wit is too coarse and licentious, not to reflect somewhat of the same character on the style.

It is unfortunate that we have no remains of the dramatic works of Cæcilius, an author who improved so highly on the comedy of Plautus, that Cicero declares him perhaps the best of the comic writers.

Terence made his first appearance when Cæcilius was at the height of his reputation. It is said that, when he offered his first play to the Ædiles, they sent him with it to Cæcilius for his judgment of the piece. Cæcilius was then at supper; and as the young bard was very meanly dressed, he was bid to sit behind on a low stool, and to read his composition. Scarcely, however, had he read a few sentences, when Cæcilius desired him to approach, and placed him at the table next to himself. His reputation arose at once to such a height, that his "Eunuchus," on its first appearance, was publicly performed twice each day.*

There is in the comedy of Terence a tone of truth and nature which distinguishes all its parts. It is dis-

* Terence was contemporary with Scipio and Lælius, and is said to have owed a great deal to their conversation and critical advice. Nay, Cicero tells us that it was rumoured that some of those comedies which pass under the name of Terence were actually written by Scipio and Lælius, particularly the Heauton-Timroumenos, and the Adelphi.

cernible in the general simplicity of the plot, in the feelings and sentiments of his characters, in the perfect purity and familiar elegance of his language. But what Terence wanted was that strong command of ludicrous imagery, that *vis comica*, or comic energy, which is frequently to be traced in Plautus.

There were four different species of comedy among the Romans:—the *Comœdia Togata*, or *Prætextata;* the *Comœdia Tabernaria;* the Atellanæ; and the Mimi. The Togata or Prætextata admitted serious personages, and was probably of the nature of the modern sentimental comedy. The comedies of Terence may probably be numbered in this class. The Comœdia Tabernaria was a representation of ordinary life, and had nothing of dignity in its composition, though it did not descend to buffoonery. The Comœdiæ Atellanæ were pieces which were not committed to writing. The actors had the outlines of the comedy prescribed to them, and the subject of the different scenes; but they filled up the dialogue from their own imaginations, in the same manner as in the pieces of Italian comedy performed at Paris in the last century. This species of representation, as it required more true genius in the actor than any other department of dramatic performance, was appropriated to the higher classes of the Roman youth, who would not permit the ordinary comedians to attempt it.

The Mimi have been particularly described in an earlier part of this work, in treating of the state of the dramatic art among the Greeks. They consisted of pieces of comedy of the very lowest species, more properly farces or entertainments of buffoonery, from which all dignity, and not unfrequently all decorum was banished; yet as the desire of variety in the composition of art will excite to new experiments, we find the Roman actors would, in the middle of the performance of a mimus, surprise and delight their audience by some unexpected stroke of the pathetic. The Roman tragedy had arrived, we are informed by some

authors, at a very high pitch of excellence, more particularly in the works of Attius and Pacuvius. Of these, unfortunately, not a vestige has been preserved, and all of this species of poetry which have reached our time, are some very indifferent tragedies published under the name of Seneca.

We see from this short review of the origin of literature among the Romans, that its earliest efforts were exclusively confined to dramatic composition.* The Romans, in a word, borrowed their literature from Greece, and first attempted the species of literature then most popular in Greece; if, indeed, their Plautus and Terence, and the rest, did more than translate or adapt the then most popular pieces of the Greek stage. It was not until the golden age of Augustus, that, by the revolutions which then took place in the public taste, the other high departments of literature were introduced at Rome. It has been observed by Paterculus, that the æra of the perfection of Roman literature was the age of Cicero, but this he extends to take

* Some of the Roman actors were men of the most respectable character. Æsopus was the Garrick of Rome, and enjoyed, like him, the countenance and friendship of the most respectable men of his country. He excelled in tragedy, and was in this department the most celebrated actor that had ever appeared on the Roman stage. Cicero experienced the advantages of his friendship and talents, during his exile; for Æsopus being engaged in a part wherein there were several passages that might be applied to Cicero's misfortunes, this excellent tragedian pronounced them with so peculiar and affecting an emphasis, that the whole audience immediately took up the allusion, and it had a better effect, as Cicero himself acknowledges, than anything his own eloquence could have expressed for the same purpose. But it is not in this instance alone that Cicero was obliged to Æsopus, as it was by the advantage of his precepts and example that he laid the foundation of his oratorical fame, and improved himself in the art of elocution. The high value which the Romans set upon the talents of this pathetic actor appears by the immense estate which he acquired in his profession: he died worth nearly $900,000. He left a son behind him, whose remarkable extravagance is recorded by *Horace, Sat.* 3, b. ii. v. 239.

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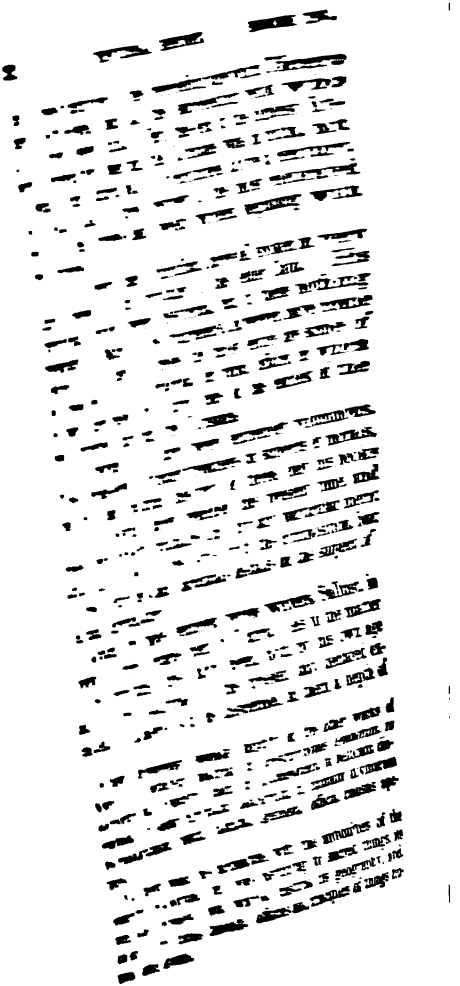

judgment, a shrewdness of remark resulting from his accurate knowledge of human nature, and an admirable talent for the delineation of character, which are all qualifications eminently requisite in a good historian. But in regard to the manner adopted in his works, it is impossible to speak favourably. In his anxiety to imitate the energetic brevity of Thucydides, he has fallen into an overstrained conciseness of expression, an affectation of uncommon idioms, and a studied adoption of antiquated phraseology, which render his style frequently obscure, and always unnatural. This is the more unpardonable, as he lived in those times in which the Roman language was in its highest purity. All imitations in style are objectionable, and indicate a servility and littleness of mind rarely found united to real talent. But to imitate in one language the peculiar idiom or particular style of any favourite author who writes in another, is of all imitations the most unnatural, and the least likely to be attended with success.

Infinitely superior to the manner of writing which we find in Sallust, is that of Cæsar. Endowed by nature with what we may truly term genius, this extraordinary man was destined to excel in everything to which he turned the powers of his mind. Unrivalled in military enterprise, of first-rate talents as a public speaker, engrossed incessantly in those various and agitating occupations which attend the life of an active general and intriguing politician, he still found time to compose those celebrated commentaries, which, in their own style as military annals, have never been excelled. To require in the writings of Cæsar those qualifications which we look for in the graver productions of a professed historian, would be to mistake entirely the character of the work. Composed in the midst of the bustle of a camp, and written probably in those few hurried hours which fill up the intervals occurring in military operations, they aim at no higher merit than that of being a faithful delin

cation of his campaigns in Gaul. As such, in that interest which is created by the talents and success of their author, as well as in perspicuity of narration and elegance and purity of style, they have ever remained unrivalled.

Different from any of the prose writers above spoken of, but combining more excellent virtues than are to be found in them all, was Titus Livius, the father, as he has been called, of Roman history. Of one hundred and forty books which he had completed, only thirty-five have reached our time. There is certainly to be found in this writer a gravity, it might almost be called a majesty, throughout his narration—a sagacity in his remarks, although not frequently intruded—and a finished eloquence in the speeches not unsparingly scattered through his history, which countenance in a great degree, those high eulogiums which Quintilian, and in a later age Casaubon, have pronounced on him. There is not, indeed, to be found among the Greeks any historian, who, with equal political judgment, perspicuity of arrangement, and a happy selection of the most important facts, possesses so wonderful an eloquence of expression.*

In the decline of Roman literature, we find many historians—but among these few of great character; yet Tacitus alone would suffice to make the age he belonged to illustrious in literature. This great writer, however, (although his merits as an historian have

* *May*, our old English poet, in his tragedy of Agrippina, has the following beautiful eulogium of historical composition, which cannot be applied to any author with more propriety than to Livy:—

"His style is full and princely,
Stately and absolute beyond whate'er
These eyes have seen; and Rome, whose majesty
Is there described, in after times shall owe
For her memorial to that learned pen
More than to all those fading monuments
Built with the riches of the spoiled world.'

been universally acknowledged,) has some prominent faults. In the narrative of those great events with which his history is occupied, he ascribes too much to the operation of deep and artful schemes of policy. His ingenious and intriguing mind is ever restlessly searching in the regions of conjecture for some dark or mysterious motive of conduct, ascribing too little to the influence of more simple and apparent causes, and eager to grasp at every shadow of a reason, provided it be sufficiently uncommon or unnatural. Too often mere probabilities are stated as demonstratively certain, and bare conjectures assume the tone of decided truths. In addition to this obscurity, in the matter resulting from a desire of being more than commonly acute, in accounting for even the most trifling events, there is in Tacitus an unnecessary brevity, and mysteriousness of style, which reminds us sometimes of the same affectation in Sallust. It is by no means to be wondered at that an author whose train of thought is so uncommon, and whose language is generally so concise, should not unfrequently require a considerable effort to be understood at all. And it would be well if all authors would recollect that they are writing for posterity, as well as for their own age; that their works, if intrinsically valuable, will be read when time shall have deprived future nations of that deep and critical knowledge of the language in which they were written which belongs to their contemporaries; and, therefore, that the most simple and unambiguous style will ever be the most lasting. Still, however, Tacitus is, in many respects, an unrivalled historian; and it is the effect even of that fault abovementioned, that few have ever penetrated with more acuteness into the secret springs of human policy, or developed with more sagacity the causes of great events.

Let us now attend to the character and merits of the most celebrated of the Roman poets.

In addition to the dramatists whom we have already adverted to, the only poets who wrote during

the period of the commonwealth were Lucretius and Tibullus. A philosophic poem is, of all literary productions, the least likely to be successful; and Lucretius, so far as his philosophy is concerned, is ponderous and verbose in his expression, perplexed in his meaning, rugged in his versification. He had in him, however, the materials of a true poet; and not unfrequently, where he has shaken himself loose of his unfortunate subject, he rises into passages of uncommon brilliancy. But the misfortune is, that that luxuriance of imagination which is the very soul of poetry, is raving and impertinence when applied to philosophy. The Cardinal de Polignac, in his *Anti-Lucretius;* Buchanan, in his poem *De Sphærâ;* and Darwin, in his various botanical, mechanical, and philosophic rhapsodies, have all strongly corroborated the truth of this observation. All of them—and in no common degree the first—have scattered throughout the rugged materials of their works the real gems of poetry; all of them evince what they could have been by splendid passages; but all of them have been tied down, by the nature of their subject, to a species of dry ratiocination, or of tedious particularity, which is either too dull to be convincing, or too detailed to be poetical. Lucretius himself, perhaps, owes his IMMORTALITY to some two or three hundred glorious lines, altogether parenthetical as regards his main design.

Catullus was the contemporary of Lucretius. The characteristics of his poetry, which consisted of odes, epigrams, and idylliums, (and which was entirely formed on the model of the Greek school,) appear to be a learned purity of diction, a certain elegance and suavity in his sentences, a virulent and biting strain of satire, and, in his amatory pieces, a voluptuous and highly-coloured imagery, which too often degenerates into broad licentiousness.

In the succeeding age of Augustus, the poetic genius of the Romans attained to the pitch of its highest elevation. Virgil, Horace, Ovid, and Tibullus,

were all contemporaries, and it may be safely asserted that these poets, in their several departments, were never equalled in any of the succeeding ages of the empire.

To offer here a minute criticism upon the poetry of Virgil would be both unnecessary and impertinent. Every one, on this head, has read, thought, and felt for himself. Rising into the sublime in many places where his subject naturally demands it; tender and pathetic in others, where the situation of his characters calls necessarily for these touches; luxuriant yet terse in his descriptions of scenery; grave, moral, and eloquent in his sentiments, and at the same time combining and regulating all these uncommon excellences by the utmost purity and correctness of taste, it was impossible but that the poet who united in himself such various and uncommon powers, should have formed the admiration of his own, and the model to succeeding, ages.

Horace, the friend and contemporary of Virgil, is to be considered in three different lights—as a lyric poet, a satirist, and a critic. In all he is excellent. In his odes, he has greater *variety* than any of his Greek predecessors appear to have attained; and he has probably equalled the most of them in their several departments. The great charm, however, is in the varied turn of his expressions, that *curiosa felicitas*, studious felicity, (to use a term of Petronius,) which no other lyric poet has ever reached. His satires, on the other hand, possess a gentlemanlike slyness and obliquity of censure which distinguish them *toto cælo* from the keen and cutting sarcasm of Juvenal.*

* To form a just estimate of the comparative merits of Juvenal and Horace as satirists, we have only to compare those satires where the two poets profess to treat the same topics, as the eighth of Juvenal with the sixth of the 1st Book of Horace, where the subject is a discussion on true nobility, or the tenth of Juvenal with the first of the 1st Book of Horace.

As a critic, the rules which Horace has given are almost entirely borrowed from Aristotle; but he has arranged them with that acute and admirable judgment, and illustrated them with that aptitude of imagery which are conspicuous in the rest of his poetical compositions.

Ovid is the next and last of that constellation of poets which formed the honour of the Augustan age. In what we term *genius*, he is decidedly inferior both to Virgil and Horace. He is deficient in grandeur of conception, in simplicity of expression, and in that high-wrought and ardent imagination which is the accompaniment of the more lofty kinds of genius. But if he wants all this, he possesses still many excellences. His invention is astonishing: in variety of story, in ingenuity of connexion, in the profusion and facility of his versification, he cannot be surpassed. He is, in these respects, a kind of Ariosto among the ancients. But even these great qualities have led him into errors. He is generally too diffuse to be grand or forcible—too particular, too much a lover of the detail of description, ever to reach the sublime. He is, in the words of Quintilian, *nimium amator sui ingenii*—too fond of his own ingenuity. His learning becomes often tedious, his narration prolix, his invention puerile. He possesses, in short, more of those minor qualifications which are necessary to constitute a true poet than any of his contemporaries:—he can be tender, harmonious, pathetic, and sometimes eloquent;—but if he is ever great, it is only in a few insulated passages, which are scattered through his works. It is more, perhaps, the effect of chance or of imitation than of that steady ray of genius which illuminates the nobler work of his friend and contemporary Virgil.

The elegies of Tibullus are elegant, but generally insipid. They never offend, but they seldom move; he is a pleasing, but not an original poet, and, owing o an extreme poverty of fancy, he is constant

pacing the same beaten track, *eodem pæne gyro concluditur.*

The last of the Roman poets whom we may call truly excellent in his own department is *Martial.* The sense which the ancients appear to have affixed to the term "epigram" appears to have been very different from its common acceptation in the present day. By epigram we generally understand some happy or amusing conceit, some sudden ebullition of wit, or humour, expressed in a short and sententious distich. According to the meaning of the ancients, however, there was no limitation as to these qualities. Any happy turn of thought, whether playful or serious, expressed in poetical language, was denominated an epigram. It is for this reason that, among the Anthologies of the Greeks, we meet with epigrams which are alternately written in a jocose or serious strain, and which, if they are often smart and humorous, are as frequently tender and pathetic. Such is in truth the real character of the Epigrams of Martial; and the execution of these, to whatever class they belong, is for the most part peculiarly happy. Yet he has many faults. His ingenuity and quickness have often betrayed him into overstrained and artificial conceits. Conscious of a peculiar talent in discerning remote, though often ludicrous analogies, he is ever too anxious to display this. He plays too much upon the sense, and puns too frequently on the sound and meaning of his words; and he has that unpardonable fault, so common to the age in which he wrote, of introducing an obscenity and licentiousness into his verses, which, although it recommended them to that degraded people for whom he wrote, is fortunately too gross to produce any serious mischief, or to create any other feeling than that of disgust.

The first symptom of the corruption of writing is a species of false and inflated style, a luxuriance of ornament, and a fondness for quaint and pointed terms of expression. This was discernible even in Martial.

When these succeed to, or rather usurp, the place of the chaste, manly, and simple mode of expression—of that style which attends more to the sense which it conveys, than to the terms or manner in which it is constructed, it is a certain indication of the decay of a just and genuine taste. Even in the end of the reign of Augustus, poetry seems to have been rather on the decline; and in the succeeding age, if we except the compositions of Martial and Juvenal, nature and simplicity had almost entirely given place to bombast and affectation. Although in Lucan we find some scattered examples of genuine poetic imagery, and in Persius several happy strokes of keen and animated satire, yet they hardly repay the trouble of wading through the unnatural fustian of the one, or the affected obscurity of the other—who, however, we should remember, wrote the pieces which remain to us in early youth.

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